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THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

TEACHING THE ART AND THE SCIENCE OF LANGUAGE

BY

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THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

PART I

THE EXPRESSIONAL ASPECT OF COMPOSITION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATION

Composition a Natural Exercise.—Composition is that exercise in which ideas are ordered in a rational sequence and then expressed in accordance with recognized standards of form. This broad conception of the term composition shows at once how varied the art of composing may be, for there are as many kinds of composition as there are forms of expression. He who is dramatizing an action that grips him, making a pictorial representation of a scene that thrills him, or translating in symbols of musical notation a melody or sentiment that charms him, is engaged in the art of composition as truly as if he were employing language, written or oral, to express this action or scene or sentiment. In all these kinds of art an individual must group his ideas in

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rational sequence and give expression to them in strict accord with standard forms. This study concerns itself with one phase only of the general art of composition, for it confines itself to verbal composition.

This theoretical definition has a very practical bearing on the work of the elementary school-teacher because it shows clearly how simple and natural an art composition is. It strips composition of the mystery and of the stiff and forbidding formalism which usually accompany it. Children must be shown that they are constantly composing, that they have been constantly composing and that they will continue to compose as long as they participate in rational communication. Composition must be shown to them to be as necessary an activity as talking or walking. The child must be led to recognize that he has "composition ability" of no mean degree. Teachers, too, must realize that most children are not deficient in the art of composition. As we listen to a narrative of a ten-year-old lad who is giving his friend a verbal picture of the athletic game he saw, or to a description by his little sister, half his age, of the particular doll that has caught her fancy, we become convinced that the art of composition is not foreign to the child. In the formal classroom lesson the life of the informal narrative and the charm of the child's description are ruthlessly crushed by the formidable technical laws of grammar and rhetoric which are imposed upon children. How to transfer this native ability to compose, so manifest in informal

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intercourse, to the formal language lessons, is the problem, the solution of which shall occupy the succeeding chapters.

The Art of Composition Is the Art of Thinking.—Composition properly taught has far-reaching educational influences. The very definition and illustrations of the art of composition show that it gives the child a training in thinking through a process of self-expression. A well-graded systematic course in composition is a means of developing clear and sequential thought. But the thought activities of the child are developed in composition only as the pupil consistently and persistently expresses himself. This form of mental development through self-expression is the ideal in the educative process. This estimate of the educational worth of composition is not extravagant when compared to the conceptions of its educative worth as formulated by specialists in the teaching of English. Sykes tells us that in composition, "The pupil's mind and life must be brought into close relationship with his efforts at self-expression." If we recall the definition of composition, this statement follows as a natural corollary. Carpenter, Baker, and Scott see in composition an exercise which is "a process of growth of the child's own capabilities, by careful observation, correct inference and adequate expression." The teaching of composition involves more than merely teaching the child to express himself; it means teaching him to see and to think and to formulate correctly and systematically the inferences from life's experiences.

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The Spirit in Composition Teaching.—The failure or the success of a composition lesson is determined to a greater extent than in almost any other school subject, by the spirit in which the recitation is conceived and carried out. In order to insure the proper atmosphere and spirit *rapport* between pupils and teacher two general cautions must constantly be kept in mind.

1. *The Play Spirit Must Pervade the Composition Period.*—Composition is too often an unwelcome period to the child. It completely overwhelms him with technicalities and empty formalism. He is asked to write on topics that are far indeed from his sphere of life; there is little that he cares to say about them. If by chance the topic is one concerning which he feels an urgency to express himself, he finds that all pleasure of self-expression is lost, for he must be careful of his penmanship; he must spell words in accordance with a tradition that seems to obey no phonetic law; his verbs must show agreement with subjects; he must bear in mind punctuation, capitalization, the thousand annoying concerns and cares that make composition a burden in his school life. Composition is an art and, like all art, is conceived in the spirit of play and is designed to give intense pleasure. The composition of the classroom must be as attractive as any other art and as natural as play.

2. *Technique Must Be Subordinated to Expression.*—The second word of caution reminds the teacher that in a composition exercise, form must be subordinated to content. In the formal lesson the child

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must be no more conscious of the laws of paragraphing, of sentence structure or of punctuation than he is conscious of these in the informal speech of his daily life. The child should learn the laws of sequence, coherence, narration and description as he learns the laws of an athletic game. In baseball, the child gives all attention to the playing, not to the science of the game; in the actual progress of the game the rules are mere incidentals. No boy has ever deliberately memorized the regulations governing various athletic activities; yet what a mastery of them he has developed! The science of the game and the niceties of form which the child acquires are unconscious results of constant playing for the sake of the game itself rather than for its technique. So, too, the laws of unity, development, suspension, ease, force — the whole series of rhetorical laws which constitute the literary technique so pretentiously imposed upon the child—should be learned through actual expression rather than through formal teaching. A composition lesson, conceived in any but this informal spirit, and conducted with a rigor and a formalism altogether too frequent in class instruction, must inevitably produce the stilted and lifeless effects which the average school child turns out. In the light of these two cautions which are sounded in the initial step in the study of methods of teaching composition, we cannot be too severe in our condemnation of the pedagogy which the educational system of one of our leading cities offered to its teachers in its manual. Although it is not part of the current manual of that city, its spirit

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still animates much of the work in elementary composition.

When any topic such as sugar, nickel, circulation of the blood or the indestructibility of matter has been as fully treated in a conversational lesson and review as may be thought expedient, the exercise in composition should immediately follow. This should be a class exercise. Care should be taken that the pupils do not make them so long as to prevent proper correction. To insure a proper variety of thought and expression it is necessary that the oral lesson which formed the basis of the composition should be so selected as to give a considerable number of interesting points or items. If injuriously frequent repetition and review are avoided the several pupils will recall different groups of items and all undue sameness will be prevented. When identical phrases or sentences are frequently found in the exercises they are unquestionable evidence of bad methods, both in the oral lessons and in the teaching of composition.

The Teaching Problems in Composition.—In the teaching of composition there is a threefold aim which must be achieved. We must now turn to each member of this triple problem to consider its importance and scope in class teaching.

1. The first aim in the teaching of composition is to stimulate a thought basis for expression. As the formal composition lesson begins, the sources of expression seem to dry up, and the children seem to have no problem in their lives that demands expression, no urgency that craves solution, no personal preference that prompts intercourse and an attempt at convincing others. This seeming dearth

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of material worthy of expression does not present a very difficult teaching problem. A little thought and sympathetic insight into child life soon reveal a great number of topics that especially appeal to the imagination of growing children, to their love of story, of action, of biography. The child's emotions and interests are intense even if they are short-lived; his likes and dislikes are many though ever changing. The sympathetic and resourceful teacher therefore need never lack an appropriate subject for children's compositions.

2. The second problem is to teach our children the laws of expression, the standards of language. The child must learn and obey the rules prescribed by legitimate usage, by grammar, and rhetoric. Here, too, we have a comparatively simple pedagogical task. A little patience and skill will enable a teacher to teach any law of grammar or rhetoric appropriate to the age and capabilities of the children. If the first lesson does not bring comprehension, a second or a third period of graded and properly presented exercises will serve this end.

3. The third aim of composition teaching is to inculcate in the pupil the habit of employing in the expression of his ideas those laws and principles of composition that have been taught him. This is the most vital problem, for it is the crux in composition teaching. Any seventh-year pupil can be taught that double negatives are wrong, that a participle alone cannot be a predicate, but not every child can be read-

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ily trained to avoid "ain't got no," "I seen," or "he done"—expressions that have the force of years of constant use back of them.

Habit is the result of constant drill through regular and frequent repetitions. Class teaching is today so hampered by its inherent limitations that this drill in sufficient repetitions in composition lessons is almost impossible. Composition has a science and an art side. The science of composition the child can readily learn but the art of composition he acquires only after long, conscientious and laborious practice. It must also be remembered that the incorrect forms that are characteristic of the speech of children have already been habituated and, in many cases, are further strengthened by the influences of home and street. The teacher must realize the colossal task that confronts him in composition teaching in all cosmopolitan cities and towns. Teachers must learn to feel that they are teachers of composition first and foremost, that an error in English is primary, that inaccuracies in facts of history, geography or arithmetic may, and should, be subordinated to correctness of speech. Teachers in the departmental system who are responsible for only one or two subjects must bear this particular dictum in mind. The departmental teacher who teaches English must communicate with his colleagues, tell them the specific forms of speech that are being taught and thus secure their coöperation by asking them to constantly correct the speech of children in all subjects. Unless teachers consciously emphasize the application of the lessons of the English

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period in all lessons, it would be better to eliminate the formal teaching of language.

SUGGESTED READING[1]

CARPENTER, BAKER and SCOTT. The Teaching of English, pp. 75-81. Longmans, Green & Co.

HOSIC, JAMES F. The Elementary School Course in English, Introduction. University of Chicago Press.

O'SHEA, M. V. Linguistic Development and Education, chaps. I and II. The Macmillan Co.

[1] The bibliographies at the end of each chapter are not exhaustive. The aim is, rather, to suggest such reading as will amplify and elaborate the various phases of the subject treated in each chapter. Where the publisher is not mentioned, the reader will find the book or the reference listed at the end of a previous chapter.

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CHAPTER II

INFORMAL COMPOSITION IN THE FIRST FOUR YEARS

ORAL CONVERSATION AND REPRODUCTION LESSONS

The Method Governed by the Basic Difficulties.—Before planning her method of presentation in a specific subject, a teacher must comprehend clearly the basic problems which confront her. The method she finally evolves must be such as is designed to meet these specific difficulties. The primary grade teacher feels herself completely overwhelmed by a host of puzzling conditions which the children create when the formal work in composition is begun. When finally systematized and simplified, these difficulties group themselves under three heads. What, then, are the basic difficulties which children present to the teacher of primary composition?

The initial problem is found in the fact that these children seem to have nothing to say in the dignified composition period. The noisy, active, talkative child is now a social vacuum. A second aggravating problem is produced by the timidity and the backwardness of the child. The newness of the work, the strangeness of classroom procedure, the consciousness of per-

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sonal limitations make these children unable to forget themselves, to come out of their shells, to lose themselves in the subject that the teacher suggests. It is obvious that much coaxing and emotional sympathy are necessary. The difficulty of these circumstances is increased by a third problem, viz., the deficiency of expression. The vocabularies of these children seem too meager to enable them to express themselves even if they have ideas that crave communication.

In the light of the basic difficulties that we have enumerated, what must the method of instruction be? The answer was suggested in the observation above: the method must be governed by these problems; it must seek to counteract them at every step in the lesson. With this end in view it can readily be seen that the method must be, in the main, an oral one—almost exclusively so in the first two years of the course—with only a crude attempt at written composition in the third year. It is through skillful oral instruction that the patient teacher strives to awaken in the mind of the child preferences and interests that crave expression; it is through the interest and the ingenuity of the treatment that she hopes to attract the child until he becomes so absorbed in the topic that he forgets himself and is thus no longer conscious of personal limitations, and talks freely and spontaneously; it is through proper gradation and organization of the oral lesson that a few words and expressions are made central in each topic and by dint of repetition become part of the child's vocabulary; it is through constant and untiring corrections

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in oral drills that incorrect forms of speech are undermined and finally eradicated. We must turn then to a consideration of the nature, the organization and the method of oral work in composition in the early grades.

ORAL WORK IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

A. Conversation and Reproduction Lessons.—1. *The Choice of a Subject.*—The most common form of oral composition is the conversation, and the reproduction lesson. The terms are self-explanatory and make formal definition unnecessary. The first problem that challenges the teacher's thought in these oral lessons is the choice of the proper subject. The teacher must exercise great care that she presents no subject that has a thought difficult for the child. It must be a topic with which the child is conversant and which immediately suggests a host of ideas in his mind, pressing for expression. Secondly, it must be a theme replete with action. Every sentence must have a "doing word" in the predicate. These immature minds find no fascination in qualities, observations and inferences. Thirdly, the topic must be, if possible, one about which the child has a preference. "Shall We Have a Relay Race or a Ring Game at Recess?" is bound to elicit an answer from a normal child. "The Kind of Dog I Want for My Pet," prompts eloquent speech in every boy.

It is well to select for this oral work a series of stories which are told by the teacher and are then used as material for reproduction lessons. These

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stories, properly selected, become a source of far-reaching values for the development of the child. They afford the child an informal and very agreeable means of developing sustained thought; they add to the child's stock of words and expressions; they introduce the child to idiomatic English; they give the children their heritage of fable, folklore and stories that have inspired the race to higher ideals of life; and finally they furnish excellent material for self-expression because these stories, by their interesting content, stir in each child a strong motive for communication.

2. *Mode of Treatment.*—Having selected a suitable topic for oral composition, the teacher is now occupied with the method of presenting it to the class, and with the conduct of the lesson. We must be sure that the facts of the topic are not the goal of the lesson, hence we need have little concern about how *exhaustively* the theme is treated. Take only the surface facts, talk about the topic rather than on the topic, follow a free and easy sequence if the children are happier in this development. *Freedom* is the keynote of the course of the lesson. Hence it must not be considered amiss if the pupils change details, or make personal additions or rational modifications. This is not a test period and the lesson must not be conducted in a "quiz" spirit. The main object is to arouse such interest and enthusiasm in the subject that the children will lose themselves in it.

Nevertheless, we must guard against mere prattle. The lesson must possess definite teaching char-

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acteristics. Chief among them we must mention the following:

a. Real Motive and Social Spirit. Unusual care must be taken to prevent the discussion from becoming perfunctory. Children must be made to feel that they are talking not because they must but because there is an urgency to communicate a conviction, to narrate a personal incident, or to give pleasure to others through the telling of interesting experiences. These promptings must serve to make the oral language work in the class as natural as oral communication in everyday life and thus infuse real motive into class discussions.

b. The Teacher's Aim. Before each discussion or reproduction the teacher must decide on the ultimate purpose of the lesson. If vocabulary is to be increased, what words are the children to acquire and what means must be adopted to make these words part of the pupils' expressional stock? If new type forms of phrases or sentences are to be learned, what shall the teacher do to introduce these naturally and frequently and to insure their use? It may be that the aim is to give pleasing content, stir imagination, provoke personal opinion—but in all cases the teacher must have an aim which molds the lesson and determines its organization.

c. Logical Organization. The theme must be unfolded with due regard to rational sequence of ideas.

d. All Children to Participate. It is necessary that every effort be made to have all children take active part in the discussion. Many lessons in oral compo-

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sition fail because the teacher neglects the backward and the diffident children who are crowded out of the lesson by the brighter and the more responsive pupils.

3. *Dramatization an Aid in Oral Reproduction and Conversation Exercises.*—The teacher who finds the diffidence of some of her children a vexing problem and a cause for their failure to participate in the class discussions and reproductions may enlist the enthusiasm of these timid pupils by an emphasis on dramatization. No appropriate theme that can be motorized should be overlooked, or, if selected, should be developed by exclusively verbal means. Dramatization has much to contribute to oral composition. It gives the retiring child a new interest in self-expression; it dispels ultra self-consciousness; it gives to expression a naturalness which it may otherwise lack and thus makes self-expression the pleasurable exercise that it is under normal conditions. But these ends of dramatization are lost unless it is spontaneous, and has its origin in the child's craving for motor expression. Successful classroom dramatization is free from affectation, and never degenerates into mere entertainment. In planning a lesson in oral composition, the teacher must seek to incorporate as many motor aids as possible for only then will the children be caught by the enthusiasm of the situation and experience the joy of communication.

4. *Systematization of the Daily Topics.*—The suggestion for freedom and spontaneity in the conduct of an oral composition lesson does not argue for a

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lack of organization in these conversation and reproduction lessons. While the children are permitted to develop the topic in any way that gives maximum expression, the subjects that are offered must follow a rational system. Monotony is the pitfall that must constantly be avoided in all this work. The only way to guard against it and insure stimulating variety is to change the nature of the topic daily. Thus, on Monday, it is a personal experience; on Tuesday, it is an ethical topic; on Wednesday, a theme in nature study is selected; on Thursday, the reading lesson offers interesting material for reproduction; on Friday, an exposition of a process learned in the manual training period affords material for conversation. How varied a list the teacher has at her command may be seen from the following table:

Partial List of Appropriate Topics

1. Narration of Personal Experiences: "What I Saw Coming to School," "An Accident on the Street," "Going to a Fire," "The Game at Recess," "Our Outing to ——," etc.

2. Nature Study: Conversation Lessons on "Birds," "Insects," "Flowers," etc.; topics that form the assignment in the course of study for the grade.

3. Description: "Pets," "Playthings," "Pictures," "Places Visited," etc.

4. Story of the Occupations Seen in the Child's Environment: The work of the baker, shoemaker, carpenter, policeman, fireman, etc.

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5. Habits of Cleanliness: "How to Have Clean Teeth," "How to Look Bright and Attractive," etc.

6. Habits of Politeness: "How to Behave at Table," "How to Behave in a Conversation," etc.

The last mentioned topics, as well as many of the others, lend themselves readily to simple and effective dramatization which arouses interest, and prompts more natural and expressive speech in children.

7. Commands by Children to Class: Pupils take turn in giving orders to class at dismissals, at recess, while passing or collecting various materials, etc. These exercises are valuable aids in developing efficiency in oral speech because they tend to inspire courage in the timid and backward child, they show the need of definiteness and precision in speech, and they insure natural rather than formal speech.

8. Reproduction of a Story: The original story may have been told by the teacher, read from a book to the class, or read by the children themselves.

9. Number Lessons and Number Games.

10. Exposition: "How to Set the Table," "How We Made a Picture Frame," "How to Make a Kite," etc.

11. Argumentative Conversation: "Where to Go on an Outing," "What Game to Play at Recess," etc.

This is only a partial list to which the teacher can add by drawing on her fund of experience. It is submitted merely to show the primary teacher that despite the simplicity of the work and the limited mental resources of the children she nevertheless has a list of topics rich enough to afford interesting va-

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riety and an opportunity to break away from the dulling sameness which is characteristic of much of the oral composition work in the lower classes.

5. *How Do These Oral Lessons Solve the Basic Difficulties?*—We must now interpret these oral lessons as remedial measures for the difficulties that were outlined at the beginning of the chapter and show how they are designed to answer the needs of the teacher of primary composition. Let us review, briefly, the three problems, the children's lack of material for expression, their backwardness, and their expressional limitations. It is evident that the variety and the nature of the topics that are selected are designed to counteract the first two of these limitations for they give the child plenty of subject-matter that is intensely interesting and capable of arousing such enthusiasm as will transcend the bonds of self-consciousness. Once the child has caught the joy of self-expression, the final problems, limitations of vocabulary and inaccuracies of speech, can be solved. As each child errs, the teacher judiciously makes the correction. Constant repetition of the same corrections of typical errors will soon show positive results. In each topic the teacher selects a few words and expressions, possibly five or six, that are most peculiar to it. In the conversation and dramatization lesson of "How to Pass a Person," such expressions as "excuse me," "beg your pardon," "polite," "impolite," and "rude" are indelibly impressed upon the mind of the child through repetition. In the lesson "The Kind of Dog I Want for a Pet," such words

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as "good appearance," "handsome," "brave," "courageous," "loyal," etc., are made central until the pupil carries them away as his own. The teacher must be ever ready to offer those words which each lesson is to contribute toward a richer vocabulary. As the child hesitates for want of a word, the teacher suggests it and thereby keeps the thought running in the pupil's mind and saves him from the paralyzing effect which a consciousness of his verbal limitations is sure to produce. But these results will not follow from a haphazard series of conversation lessons. The topics must be carefully selected and organized into a progressively graded series. Each lesson must be planned to enrich the vocabulary and to correct the most flagrant inaccuracies in the speech of young pupils.

6. *The Danger of Formalism in Early Work in English: Impression, Expression, Formal Instruction the Desired Sequence.*—The great danger in early composition lessons is the introduction of a crushing formalism which robs the lesson of all expressional pleasures and renders the topic under discussion a mere excuse for a drill in mastery of words or in idiomatic or grammatical forms. It must be remembered that all technical elements of speech must grow naturally out of preceding discussions of interesting themes. The steps in early language work can therefore be summed up as three: (a) *impression;* (b) *expression;* (c) *formal language instruction.*

The first concern of the teacher must be to stir the child's self-activity, so that it acquires a liberal stock

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of experiences, together with a rich imagery of all of them. Hence the lessons in nature study, in reading, in local history and geography and in manual training must be regarded as forming the first step in composition, for in all of these the child is acquiring a large variety of ideas. But class instruction in all these subjects that is properly motivated stirs in each child a desire to reproduce what it sees clearly or to communicate to others convictions that have been implanted. The more interesting the impression, the more intense is the child's yearning for expression. The expressional phases in all lessons must therefore be looked upon as exercises in composition, for they train children in the art of self-expression. Errors of vocabulary, of grammar, etc., made by children in the course of natural speech should now form the basis of formal instruction in English. To deviate from this order, *impression, expression, formal instruction,* is to court a formalism which deadens all language work in the grades.

Opportunities for Oral Language Lesson.—In concluding the chapter on conversation and reproduction lessons, we must again emphasize the principle that was made basic in the initial discussion, viz., the manifold opportunities that the teacher finds in the curriculum for giving children the necessary practice in language work. Every subject, even manual training and calisthenics, can be utilized as material for language lessons. The less we rely on the formal language period and the more we look upon all subjects in the curriculum as agents in developing the art of speech, the

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surer are we to give children the language proficiency that should ultimately be developed. In addition we must urge the values for composition, of memorization and recitation of selected prose and poetry. These memory selections give children, among other returns, models of correct speech, enlarged vocabularies and beautiful sentiments beautifully expressed. Unless we look upon the whole curriculum as a scheme to develop proficiency in language, formal composition lessons become both sterile and stupid.

SUGGESTED READING

The suggested reading for this chapter will be found at the end of Chapter III.

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CHAPTER III

FORMAL COMPOSITION IN THE FIRST FOUR YEARS

The Need of Formal Language Drills.—The discussion of the teaching of composition in the first four years of the elementary course has thus far concerned itself exclusively with the means of stirring and sustaining natural and enthusiastic speech in the classroom. The method outlined in the preceding chapter sought therefore to free itself from all formalism, from all rules of language, and from conscious focalization on the technique of speech. The child saw no serious object in the conversation or reproduction lesson; the teacher, not the child, was aware of an attempt to introduce a series of model expressions, to occasion natural communication, or to increase vocabulary. We come now to a discussion of the more formal side of language work in the first half of the school course. If the environment of our pupils were thoroughly Americanized in language, as well as in customs and ideals, there would be no need of adding to the informal work in composition previously outlined for the early years. But when we realize the foreign influences and languages that make up the environment of many of our pupils, it becomes ap-

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parent that merely hearing correct and corrected speech in the classroom, will not serve to counteract the persistent impressions of incorrect speech which are borne in on the vast majority of children of foreign parentage. Even in the early years formal language lessons must be given, drills must be had on set language forms, and typical errors of speech must be systematically undermined and supplanted by correct forms. This formal work in the primary classes can take three forms, viz.: (1) *memorization and recitation,* (2) *teaching necessary language facts,* and (3) *correction of common errors of speech.* Let us turn to these in the order in which they are enumerated.

Memorization and Recitation.—It is obvious that memorization and recitation of properly selected prose and poetry tends, among other ends, to enrich a child's stock of words and phrases, to give him a series of interesting ideas and inspiring ideals in a form truly artistic, to train in organizing ideas and to discourage self-consciousness. The value of this form of language work in early classes is obvious, but the method that is followed determines the degree to which these ends are attained. Few lessons are as stilted and depressing as a perfunctory recitation of a memorized selection in which each child recites merely to satisfy the teacher that he has memorized the words and lines in proper sequence. As the method of conducting these lessons is treated fully in the latter part of the book, the reader is referred to a subsequent chapter.

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Learning the Necessary Language Facts.—*Their Use for Certain Classes of Children.*—We took occasion to note in a preceding discussion that the child whose own language abounds with barbarisms, and whose environment tends to perpetuate these, must be given a series of language drills which will tend to teach the basic forms and constructions of our tongue. Mere imitation of the teacher's English is not efficacious, for it cannot counteract all the contrary forces in the child's environment. Rigorous and persistent drills are necessary to teach these children not to say: "I *brang* my books," "He *writ* his lessons," "He *hurted* himself," "It *growed* there," *"He learns me out," "It stands written,"* "Every morning I *put myself on"* (dress myself), *"a* eye for *a* eye," *"five mans and six mans is eleven," "five gooses,"* "This is *more heavier* than that," "The boys *is* good," *"Me and him* went," *"Me* hat and *me* coat is on the nail," etc. These errors are not imaginary. They form part of a list that the author gathered in the primary grades in one school. True, no one child made all of these errors, but every child heard all of them. It is evident that the informal work outlined in the preceding chapter lacks the vigor and the concentrated effort necessary to banish such barbarisms from the speech of these children.

Cautions in Early Language Lessons.—Great care must be taken in planning these formal drills for the early grades. There are a number of cautions that must be observed lest we dissipate the worth of these language lessons.

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1. The teacher must realize that these drills on language forms are not lessons in elementary grammar. No attempt must be made to introduce terminology or rules. It is not necessary that the child know why "*me* hat and *me* coat" must give way to "*my* hat and *my* coat." In the grammar lesson, the justification for the use of the possessive form "*my*," and the reasons for the condemnation of the objective form, "*me*," must be given; in these early lessons the child takes language forms on faith and the teacher is concerned primarily with the problem of developing in the pupils the habit of using "*my*" rather than "*me*" in these expressions.

2. It must be remembered that an isolated language form does not become part of spontaneous speech. The child who recites "my hat," "my coat," "my book," "my ring," etc., nevertheless falls back to "You should have seen '*me*' team play," when engaged in natural conversation. Unless the form is taught in natural context, it will not serve to rehabilitate the speech of the child.

3. It is obvious that an occasional lesson on any correct form of speech will not insure its use. Unremitting drills, well-graded and varied drills are necessary to put our pupils on their guard against the influences of the incorrect language that may assail their ears.

4. The supervisor of this work must remember that this part of the curriculum must be very flexible, for the language facts to be taught vary with each school district in the cosmopolitan cities and

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towns of the country. It is evident, therefore, that in some schools the list of language facts to be taught will be long, while in others it will reduce itself to only a very few facts, or even none at all.

Method of Teaching Necessary Language Facts.— It remains for us therefore to indicate clearly how these necessary language facts are to be taught. To give this work natural context, it is best to group these language drills around a language center. The New York City syllabus offers an illustration of the point in question. It assigns as basic for language drills in the fourth and fifth years, the four types of sentences which give the most important forms of thought, viz., (1) what things do, (2) what is done to things, (3) what the qualities of things are, and (4) what things are. How can these forms of expressing thought become the center of drills on necessary language facts?

Let us turn our attention to the first-type form of sentence. The teacher introduces this type by calling on the children to tell what men do for a living. With little trouble there is elicited the following:

"The farmer plants corn and wheat."

"Soldiers fight battles."

"The shoemaker mends old shoes."

"The jeweler makes rings and pins."

At the next lesson the problem is to list what the city does for us. In like manner the following was obtained from a fourth-year class:

"New York City gives us many parks."

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"It sends its children to school."
"The fire department puts out many fires."
"The health department saves many lives."

Each lesson assigns a central theme around which children form sentences of the first type. Care must be taken not to allow these sentences to become heterogeneous; each day's lesson must have its distinctive center around which these sentences are grouped. Interest is sustained by the variety of ideas contributed.

After children can give sentences with a fair degree of fluency, each group of expressions may be reviewed in an exercise in which they try to find the "who" or "what" word and the "doing" word of each sentence. *"The farmers plant corn and wheat"* is therefore submitted to this analysis and the children conclude that *farmers* is the "who" word and *plant* the "doing" word. In like manner, *"New York City gives people many parks"* is analyzed, and the children conclude that *New York City* is the "what" word and *gives* the "doing" word. This exercise is continued for a number of lessons until children gain facility in recognizing subject and predicate.

The next step in the lesson is to take known sentences and require the children to keep the "doing" word and change the "who" or "what" word. *"The fire department puts out many fires"* thus becomes, *"The firemen put out many fires," "Policemen put out many fires," "Brave men put out many fires,"* etc. In the same way children are required to keep the "who" or "what" word and change the "doing" word.

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The original sentence quoted above then becomes, *"The fire department saves many lives," "The fire department answers the fire alarms," "The fire department sends out the engines,"* etc. Such synthetic exercises give children practice in making sentences and develop in them a feeling for the function of the subject and predicate.

The next progressive set of drills requires a change of number of the "who" or "what" word. Thus, for the first of these drills the teacher gives only regular nouns, the plurals of which are formed merely by adding "s" or "es." The sentence *"The farmers plant corn and wheat"* is written on the board and the children are required to change to the singular, *"The farmer plants corn and wheat";* or the teacher may give the singular, *"The jeweler makes rings and pins,"* and ask for the plural, *"The jewelers make rings and pins."* In the succeeding drills the children learn of nouns, the plurals of which are formed by changing "y" to "i" and adding "es"; of others where "f" is changed to "v," and "es" is added, and of still others that must be changed in form entirely, like "ox, oxen," "tooth, teeth," "child, children," etc. In this series of drills the child not only learns the plurals of useful nouns but also develops a sensitivity for the agreement of subject and predicate. After much repetition the child learns that it is wrong to say "the farmers plants," just as it is incorrect to say "many tooths." In neither case does the teacher give the reason.

Up to this point the sentences have been declarative

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in form. Interrogative sentences are now taken up. The teacher asks, *"Do the farmers plant their corn?"* and, *"Does the farmer plant his corn?"* and the children reply respectively, *"Yes, they do plant their corn,"* and *"Yes, he does plant his corn."* The same groups of sentences are now reviewed in their interrogative form and the child receives further drill on plural forms, learns the use of the auxiliary "do," which is peculiar to the English language and acquires a feeling for the agreement in number of pronoun and antecedent.

The negative statements are now the subjects for a series of graded drills. The teacher asks, *"Do farmers waste any time?"* and the children reply, *"No, they do not waste any time,"* or, *"No, he does not waste any time,"* if the singular is required. These negative drills, given patiently and consistently, will undermine the double negative, so frequent in the speech of those children whose English is acquired on the street.

What was done with the first type, what things do, can be done with the second type, what is done to things. The third and the fourth types, the qualities of things and what things are, offer even wider range of drills in language structure and vocabulary. The following are suggestions for possible language lessons based on the third type of expression:

1. Oral Composition. Topic: "The Park." Sentences of third type elicited: The park is large, The trees are beautiful, The flowers are sweet, The fountain is pretty, etc.

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2. Analysis showing "who" or "what" word and "quality" word.

3. Keep "who" or "what" word and change "quality" word; vice versa.

4. Make sentences of the following: the green leaves, the pretty fountain, etc.

5. State whether the following things are hard or soft, cool or warm, large or small, rough or smooth, etc. Give a list of nouns, and elicit the sentences from the children.

6. State opposite qualities or state other words to express the same quality: The day is *warm,* The day is *cool,* The day is *chilly,* etc., hence a vocabulary drill.

7. Plurals and Singulars.

8. Interrogative Form.

9. Negative Form.

10. Given any topic, "The Snow," for instance, require sentences of all types, as follows: "The snow falls on the ground. It is shoveled by men and boys. Snow is very cold and white," etc.

The writer does not think that these four types form the best language center for a drill on the necessary language facts. They are used for illustration because they are assigned in many courses of study and they serve to show that the elementary language lessons can be freed from cumbrous terminology, and yet be made the means of teaching the child the structure of the sentence, the function of its parts, the plural forms, the agreement between subject and predicate, the agreement between pronoun and antecedent, the use of auxiliary verbs, the correct form

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of the negative statement. These four types of sentences may also be made the means of developing richer and more flexible vocabularies. The school where most of the children are of foreign birth can well afford, therefore, to spend two years on these formal drills.

The Systematic Correction of Common Errors of Speech.—*When Necessary.*—There are two methods of teaching children the necessary language facts and instilling in them habits of correct form in elementary language structures. The first is by the method just outlined—by a systematic, graded, positive series of drills on language forms. The second method is the negative which teaches only those language forms that children habitually misuse. The first is the method of prevention; the second the method of cure. Courses of study in cosmopolitan cities prescribe the systematic correction of typical errors of speech for all grades beginning with the second or the third year.

Limitations in the Prevailing Method of Dealing with Common Errors of Speech.—What is the usual method which teachers follow in their attempt to rid the speech of their pupils of the typical mistakes? Very often a teacher culls all the common language errors which experience has taught her abound in children's speech. These are taken up, one by one, corrected arbitrarily, drilled on in appropriate exercises and dismissed for a second common error which is similarly treated in the next language drill. One day the lesson is on "seen and saw," a second on "done and did," a third on "haven't no," a fourth

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on "brang and brung," until every error on the list has been dignified by a separate period. Very often, the lesson ends with an arbitrary generalization of the type, "Seen can be used only with *have* or *has*."

What is the usual result of such pedagogical practice? In each grade the entire list of common errors is corrected but in each succeeding grade the very same errors are again studied with the same futile result. There are two reasons which account for this waste. The first reason is lack of drill. We need a sledge-hammer blow; the common method of dealing with these errors of speech makes them all pass before the class in a happy merry-go-round while we apply the feather duster to each. These incorrect forms are habits; the problem confronting us is how to break an old habit and inculcate a new one. Hard unrelenting drill, untiring repetition, are the price of habit formation. The prevailing method described above surely fails to pay the price. Secondly, the lessons are too formal. The drills are not natural enough, nor are the correct forms learned through natural context in the course of natural expression.

A Method of Dealing with Common Errors of Speech.—What mode of teaching can we suggest in dealing with common inaccuracies of speech? The following procedure offers a more rational and natural form of exercise and also provides sufficient drill. All the common errors found in children's oral speech and written work should be listed and arranged in a graded series by the supervisor. Such a tabulation would give about thirty to thirty-six common forms that children

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constantly misuse. Each grade, begin the second year, should have a definite n errors assigned, three or four in the lo or six, in addition to a review of those in the higher grades. With responsibility [redacted] five or six forms, each teacher could give such drill and application as would permanently undermine these common errors. Let us assume that the teacher of a third-year class must undermine, (1) "it is me," (2) double negative, (3) "I seen it," (4) "I done it," and (5) "I brang my lunch." The first error is selected for study and drill. The teacher puts on the board or better still on a long cardboard the following model sentence: "It is I who am knocking," said Little Red Riding Hood. Then comes the following drill:

Teacher: "What was Little Red Riding Hood asked?"

Pupil: "Who is knocking?"

Teacher: "What did she reply?"

Pupil: "It is me."

Teacher: "Look at the blackboard." The child who made the mistake is given a chance to correct his answer.

Teacher: "William, who spoke when——"

Pupil: "It was me."

Teacher: "Answer as Red Riding Hood would."

Pupil: "It was I who spoke," etc.

The type sentence is kept in full view of the class for a week or two, depending upon the gravity of the error and the frequency of misuse of the correct

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on form. It becomes the basis of short daily drills of two or three minutes in the morning and again in the afternoon. Other model sentences of the same grammatical construction are presented and the drills are continued. The initial sentence seems to become part of the children for it is a permanent standard for reference in the future. At any time when the child gives the objective "me" for the nominative "I," the teacher simply refers to the standard sentence by asking, "What did Little Red Riding Hood say? Now correct your own sentence."

In the same way, this series of drill lessons is followed by, " 'I am not afraid; I have no fear,' said the brave Columbus." This becomes the standard or type sentence for a series of questions in which the child is asked, "Have you money?" "Have you paper and pencil?" "Has he courage?" etc. In each case the teacher requires the two forms of expressing the negative. The child may reply, "I have no fear" or "I haven't any fear," but he is led to avoid, "I haven't no fear." These daily drills are again continued for about a fortnight, when the correct form of the negative becomes part of the child's expressional stock. When, in the future, a pupil tells his teacher, "I haven't no pencil," he is promptly told to recall the type sentence about Columbus and model his answer accordingly. In such a method of organization and procedure the necessary continued and persistent drill can be given to each error, and natural context is used to make permanent the correct form. Each teacher can now be held responsible because the assignments are

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definite for each grade. Through such a method the flagrant errors of common speech can be eradicated by the time the child completes his fifth year in the elementary course, and teachers in the last three years would then be spared the discouraging task of repeating the unsuccessful work of so many lower grades in addition to teaching the advanced language lessons which presuppose a foundation of elementary knowledge.

Development of Efficiency in Early Language Work Is Slow and Difficult.—Throughout the slow, tedious and persistent drills that characterize the language lessons of the early grades, the teacher must not become discouraged. Experience alone can impress the teacher with the slowness and the difficulty of developing efficiency in oral expression among children. The teacher inexperienced in this phase of elementary instruction loses heart at the slow rate of progress in the linguistic development of her pupils. But this slow maturing efficiency in language is to be expected when we consider the many causes that are operative in producing it. We must now turn to them.

1. *Efficiency in Oral Expression Is Usually Special, not General.*—People often speak fluently and coherently on one subject but are exceedingly poor in conversational powers on other topics. The proverbial example of the professor who is an interesting speaker in his specialty but a bore in other fields of human interest, illustrates this phenomenon. There are students who are exceedingly intelligent in dis-

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cussing athletic topics but who are inane when they participate in general class discussions. Children who are alert and winning in speech during play may show a decided lack of linguistic ability in formal classroom recitation.

2. *Efficiency of Speech Is Often a Native Endowment.*—Linguistic ability is with many children a birth gift. This explains why so many people are delightful speakers on any topic and can spin a clever verbal thread around any idea. We listen to them with rapt attention, giving ourselves to their every word, only to find in the end that they have contributed nothing of value.

3. *Oral Speech Is Usually Developed as Need Is Felt.*—The individual who lives a life of social contact that prompts expression soon finds that the ability to express himself grows in proportion to need and use. Country children are hence more retiring and less communicative than their talkative and impulsive city cousins.

4. *The School May Repress Linguistic Development.*—The school with its organization and discipline, recognizing not the individual but the group, is usually repressive. Free and spontaneous speech is not allowed; the child as a member of a class has not the opportunity to express himself as often as he ought to, and finally the systematic recitation kills voluntary speech, for the child must express the book or the teacher rather than himself.

Lessons for the School.—This analysis of the causes of slow and labored development of efficiency

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in oral expression has its lessons for the school. (a) It shows us clearly that every study must be a language lesson. Correct speech cannot be habituated, unless we make this concession to the place of English in the curriculum. (b) Wherever possible, children should be encouraged to talk freely in the course of the recitation. Topics assigned to a pupil should be broad and should call for expression in a number of sentences. The recitation that is made up of a series of close-fitting petty questions, whose answers require the mere ejaculation of a word or a phrase, is a means of repressing speech and retarding linguistic progress. The topical method, rather than the petty question method of the recitation, should be followed wherever convenient and practical. (c) Overconscientious and painfully accurate teachers must remember that it is not advisable to curb the child's flow of speech by minute corrections. Let the child have his say, let him speak his mind, then offer the corrections, the changes, and the modifications that are necessary. There is no reason why the child should always be interrupted with such petty suggestions as, "Answer in a full sentence." This sacred regard for the "full sentence" produces artificiality and stiltedness of speech characteristic of classroom recitations. Adults do not always speak in complete sentences; what justification have we for imposing this standard on pupils? (d) Finally, teachers should always encourage fluent and coherent speech among children. If we are to seek the larger values in our work, petty facts must be sacrificed for proper

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form. When a child formulates his answer in well-rounded, sequential sentences, it must be received with words of praise and held up to the others in his class as an enviable model worthy of their imitation.

WRITTEN WORK IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

Its Minor Position.—In the early years written composition can be accorded, at best, a subordinate place when compared to the varied forms of oral exercise. Too early an insistence on written composition works irreparable harm. The child loses in expressional power, for when the difficulties of penmanship, form, spelling, capitalization and punctuation confront him, all expression is at once killed. We must wait until the elementary requirements in spelling, capitalization, penmanship, etc., have become habituated before written work is begun. Written composition in the first three years is hence almost negligible, for the child is then acquiring technical and formal habits in language. It is in the fourth year that the written work assumes any seriousness of form and content, for now written compositions of two paragraphs should be attempted. The methods to be suggested are very much like those that we shall study for the upper grades with, however, such modifications as common-sense and practical experience would dictate. Thus, for example, in the primary classes the child follows the model more faithfully, imitation is more slavish, the

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preparatory oral drill deals with a greater number of details of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, etc., and the models are imitated for their very form as well as for their spirit.

The Transition from Oral to Written Composition.— It is well, however, to note how the first written composition is to be introduced, how the transition is to be made so that whatever efficiency the child has acquired in oral expression can be transferred to the written exercises. It must be remembered that ability in oral expression is no guarantee of equal efficiency in written expression. Graphic expression differs psychologically as well as physiologically from oral expression. This is why children efficient in oral composition find that all ideas seem to disappear instantaneously when they are confronted with pen and paper. How shall we aid them in their difficulty?

Let the teacher assign the topic, "Yesterday's Fire Drill," and put it on the blackboard. The children are now told that they are to write a composition on it, hence they copy the title on their papers. The teacher then puts on the board the first question, the answer of which will be the first sentence of their composition. The questions are so worded that they contain the words and phrases necessary in the formulation of the answer. After the answer is elicited orally the children write it on their papers. The following form may be used both for the blackboard work of the teacher and the children's exercise on paper:

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Teacher's Blackboard Questions	*Children's Answers on Paper*
1. Did we have a fire drill yesterday? 2. Did the four bells ring out loud and clear? 3. Did you know whether there was a fire or not? 4. Were the children quiet and quick? 5. Was the teacher pleased with the drill?	1. We had a fire drill yesterday. 2. The four bells rang out loud and clear. 3. We did not know whether there was a fire or not. 4. The children were quiet and quick. 5. The teacher was pleased with the drill.

The answers written by the children are only transcripts of the words used by the teacher. Nevertheless, when taken together, they show good sequence and make up a well-organized paragraph. This method is pursued until some confidence is developed and transitional difficulties are in a measure overcome. After that, the model is presented and studied, transcribed or imitated as the case may require, but the general method will be only a modification of the procedure to be suggested for the grammar grades.

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CHAPTER IV

COMPOSITION IN THE GRAMMAR GRADES

THE SELECTION OF A PROPER SUBJECT

The Method-whole in Composition.—Careful and thorough treatment of a composition lesson necessitates three periods that are distinct in aim and procedure. Briefly we may characterize these as follows: (1) the *period of oral preparation* in which the science of composition is taught—this is the oral teaching period in which the teacher leads and the child is learning the laws of language; (2) the *period* of *written composition* in which the child is given every opportunity to express himself and acquire the art of composition, and (3) *the period of correction,* the aim and scope of which are apparent.

These three periods are usually given on three separate days but any two of these may follow on the same day as the exigencies of special circumstances and classes may demand. The teacher seeking constructive programs of work need hardly be reminded that no method has universal application *in toto.* Some parts must be omitted, others modified, and new devices introduced to adjust any method to the specific problems of a particular class. But every meth-

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od that merits pedagogical approval is based on sound principle and worthy aim. In applying a method, the teacher must be sure that despite the changes and the additions that are made, the justifying principle has been retained. Any method that is not subjected to personal scrutiny, to modification in an attempt to adjust it to specific needs, becomes a pedagogical strait-jacket and inevitably leads to failure.

The Preparatory Period.—The method of teaching composition in the grammar grades is determined by the same considerations as those which govern the method in the primary grades, viz., the basic difficulties that confront the children. We must stop, therefore, to note the problems that make composition teaching a difficult task for the teacher. In the main we may group these under three heads:

1. *Lack of Material Worth Expressing.*—At first thought this difficulty seems slight and only of passing importance, but a moment's consideration brings conviction to the contrary. College students when asked to select their own topics for debates, essays, and the like, experience a feeling of hopelessness as they take mental stock. They have many ideas, they have studied many subjects, but none of them seems big and urgent, and worthy of expression. If this is true of students who have attained some degree of maturity and whose minds have been subjected to the broadening influence of study, how true is it of the child with immature mind and narrow personal aspect of the world.

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2. *Lack of Organization of Ideas.*—Children do not feel the need for sequence and systematization of facts. They ramble through their subject in aimless, discursive style; they do not know that "to compose" one must systematize his ideas before giving expression to them.

3. *Limitations of Speech.*—Having met the first two difficulties, we are confronted by the third—expressional deficiencies. These may be summed up under (a) involved and confused forms of expression, (b) incorrect forms of speech, and (c) limitations in variety and extensiveness of vocabulary. In developing the method of teaching composition in the grammar grades we shall follow the sequence in which these difficulties are stated. We turn then to the main problem of the present chapter.

THE SELECTION OF THE SUBJECT

The Sources of Subject-matter.—Every child has two rich sources of subject-matter for expression; two great reservoirs which can be tapped for material for compositions. These we may term the direct source and the indirect source.

The Direct Source.—The direct source sums up all composition material that can be obtained from the child's fund of experience, from his creative imagination, and from the host of incidents and stories that were heard or read. The mere fact that the child is normal and has lived his short life in an active society, guarantees a response from this personal source. The responses which can thus be elic-

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ited from the children are limited only by the ingenuity and the sympathy of the teacher.

Concrete illustrations are more suggestive and convincing to the teacher whose composition work does not progress because of the limited number of appropriate subjects. Let us turn to a few. What a host of possibilities do we actualize when we ask the child to begin its composition with, "The match that was dropped on the floor of the barn was not lost because——" Children in a sixth-year class suggested the following developments in their compositions. These are given in a summarized form.

Child A: A tramp in search of shelter steals into the barn. He accidentally steps on the match and sets fire to the structure. The peril of the tramp; the rescue. The tramp turns out to be the long lost and wayward son of the owner. Reconciliation and reform.

Child B: A rainy and dismal day. The children of the owner at play in the barn. The match stepped on. The spluttering not heard in the general noise of the game. The fire. The rescue by the arch enemy of the boy at play in the barn. The reward of the rescuer; friendship renewed.

Child C: A rat in the barn. The fire. Total destruction of the barn with its stock of the owner's wealth. Poverty of the farmer. Moral of the tale.

The conceptions of these three children are given to illustrate the many possibilities suggested by such an appeal to productive imagination. Similar topics can readily be invented by the sympathetic

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and resourceful teacher, who can enter into the spirit that must pervade the composition lesson. In a fifth-year class, the topic, "What I Found Under a Stone," was assigned for plot invention, preparatory to the writing of the composition. Through questions and suggestions the teacher stirred the children's memories of such incidents and experiences as would readily lend themselves to the building of a new situation suited to the given topic. The richness and diversity of the results may be seen from the following plots evolved, in the main, by the children:

PLOT 1

The stone lifted. The opening of a cave. The cave entered. The home of a robber band. Death threats. Joins robber band. Gains their confidence. Leads an expedition. Leads robber to capture.

PLOT 2

Cave, robbers, death threats, as in first plot. Pleading by a masked member of the band. Life spared. Escape with this unknown friend. Recognition—lost and wayward friend. Reformation.

PLOT 3

Stone lifted. Bag of money found. Seek owners. None found. Money divided with friend. Story of the life of evil and ruin of the one and the life of social service and happiness of the other.

PLOT 4

An inventor, unsuccessful and discouraged, walks in the woods. Sits on the stone to rest. Stone moves and he lifts it. Finds a motto, "Perseverance brings success." Curiosity

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as to meaning. Search for meaning. A message of hope for him. Perseverance and final success.

Excellent results are obtained by appealing to this direct source by such a model as "Der kleine Johannes," given in Maxwell and Johnson's "School Composition." It is reproduced for the convenience of the reader.

LITTLE JOHANNES

It was warm by the pond, and still as death. The sun, flushed and tired from its day's work, seemed to be resting for a moment on the top of the distant ridge of dunes before diving below. Almost perfectly the smooth water reflected its glowing face. The overhanging leaves of the beech took advantage of the stillness to gaze intently at themselves in the mirror. The solitary heron, who was standing on one foot between the broad leaves of the water-lilies, forgot that he had gone out to catch frogs, and stared in front of him, lost in thought.

Then Johannes came to the little grass-plot to see the cloud grotto. Plump! plump! the frogs sprang from the shore. The mirror broke into ripples, the sun picture separated into broad stripes, and the beech leaves rustled crossly, for they had not looked at themselves sufficiently.

Fast bound to the naked roots of the beech lay a little old boat. Johannes had been strictly forbidden to get into it. Oh, how strong the temptation was this evening! Already the clouds were forming themselves into an awful gateway, behind which the sun would go to rest. Glittering little clouds ranged themselves in lines at the sides, like a body-guard in golden armor. The surface of the water glowed also, and red sparks flew like arrows through the reeds.

Slowly Johannes unfastened the cord of the boat from the beech roots. To float there in the midst of that splendor! Presto, the dog had already sprung into the boat, and,

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before his master had made up his mind, the reeds bent and pushed them both forward in the direction of the setting sun.

(Translated from the Dutch of "Der kleine Johannes," by Frederik van Eeden.)

The children study the model until they see the grandeur of the picture; then they are required to complete the story as their fancies see it. The range of dramatic possibilities varies with the age, the grade, and the native abilities of the pupils. A few of many good results are given.

Martin S., aged twelve, in a sixth-year class, suggested that a sudden storm which came, "soon broke the mirror with angry waves that rocked the boat to and fro." *Der kleine Johannes* now became frightened and clung to the floor of the boat for safety. "As darkness fell the rocking boat put Johannes to sleep." In the fury of the storm that followed the boat capsized and the unfortunate lad "never awoke to realize that he too 'had set off in the direction of the setting sun.'" This little drama, charming and tender in its conception, bespeaks an emotional refinement not usual in the impulsive and ruthless lad of twelve.

Such a model opens up a vista of possibilities which make it appropriate for almost any grammar grade, as is proved by the following two products written by children in the last year of the school course. The compositions as given are accurate reproductions of the children's results except for the correction of a few minor errors, which they themselves corrected when the compositions were returned to them.

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Little Johannes

Par. I. Introduction.
- a. Time.
- b. Place.

Par. II. Little Johannes.
- a. His longing.
- b. His dream.

Par. III. Home again.

It was a warm, sultry day in summer. The lake lay without a ripple on its face. Above, the silver birch stood majestically reflecting its leaves and form. Somewhat off from this stood a lone heron solemnly standing on one foot like a sentinel gazing at its own reflection in the lake, forgetting that it had come down to the lake to catch frogs.

All of a sudden this tranquillity was broken by a litle boy making his entrance upon the scene. The birch rustled its leaves in disapproval as some of the frogs having been scared jumped into the water and wrinkled the surface. This little boy's name was Johannes. He owned a little boat which was moored to the shore. He was strictly forbidden to go out in this boat. The little boy had a strong temptation to take just one ride. But he overcame his temptation and sat admiring the old boat, for he had had much fun in it. Night was coming and the little boy finally saw a great many little frog-men dancing around his feet. Then some of the elder ones took him by the hand and took him through a wonderful land. This land was all illuminated with colored crystal-like lights. This was the festival of the frogs; there were some who had the greenest dresses on, with big brown spots on them, and others with brown dresses with white underneath the throat. In one part of this great land there were tables set and great dishes of good things to eat. In another there were frogs dancing and singing in frog language, but the little boy understood them, for the fairy frog had put him under a spell. Finally

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the frogs started to eat and when they had finished they started to depart. Johannes could not go, for he did not know the way. When the last one had departed he heard a great noise and clamor and looking around he saw that everything was dark, and that his father and a number of men were standing around. He had been asleep and his father had been out hunting for him with a number of other men until he found him. His father took him in his arms and carried him home, where he told of his adventure.

Johannes' Adventure

It was near the close of a sultry day in summer. The sun, tired from its day's hard work, seemed to say "Good night" to the world before it was wrapped up in the darkness of the coming night. The frogs seemed to have stopped their din, as if in awe of the setting sun. Little Johannes thought it was the most beautiful sight he had ever seen as he came tripping lightly down the path. At the sound of his feet the frogs seemed to awaken from their trance and one after another their plump! plump! showed they had retreated into the forest of water-lilies.

Tied to a tree was a small boat, which was the property of our hero's father. Little Johannes thought that his mother would like to have some lilies. But really he only wanted an excuse to go out in the boat. He set the boat adrift. After half the distance had been covered little Johannes sat back on the seat and fell asleep.

He awoke with a start, for he had heard his name called. He listened for some moments to make sure that he was not mistaken.

"Johannes!" said a soft voice behind him. He turned and saw before him a beautiful girl.

"What do you want and who are you?" asked Johannes, rubbing his eyes to make sure he was awake.

"I am the Queen of the Lily-pads," said she, "and I have

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come to warn you that if you disobey your father again and come out in your boat after dark, the Frog King will surely catch you and he is a very bad man."

"All right, your majesty," answered little Johannes, "I'll go right home and never go out again, if that nasty old King will let me alone this time."

"Oh, there you are," said a voice, and little Johannes awoke and stared around him, thinking that it was the Frog King who had come to get him, but it was only his father. While he slept the boat had drifted ashore and the little lad's father had found him, after a long, exhausting search.

The Indirect Source.—The second, the indirect source, sums up all the knowledge the child has, or can obtain from class teaching, textbooks, encyclopedias, and magazines. Whenever we appeal to the indirect source we have composition through correlation. In history, the children write on "The Battle of Bunker Hill," "The Voyages of Columbus," or "Daniel Webster." In geography the topic selected may be, "The People of China," "Notes of a Traveler," "Pictures of Places I Visited," etc.—in a word, the host of topics to which mentally lazy teachers have recourse.

The Danger in the Indirect Source: Overcorrelation.—There is great danger in resorting to the impersonal source for subject-matter. The composition lesson is usually regarded by many teachers as a period in which we can elaborate and "fill out" what was neglected in geography, history, or nature study. We must never forget that the primary object of a composition lesson is expression and not the mas-

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tery of information, however important. The most pleasing element in any pupil's composition is its spirit of originality, of spontaneity, and freedom. Composition cannot show these characteristics if it is a mere repetition of the formal lessons in which the child learns to express the textbook or the teacher, but not himself. Injudicious correlation saps life and virility from all composition exercises.

The Test of Good Correlation in Composition.— In all correlation in composition the child should be encouraged to introduce his own individuality into the narrative. He should write his story from his own point of view, as if he really had lived through it. The autobiographical element often makes correlation helpful and suggestive. Therefore, the topic, "Columbus," becomes "The Conspiracy to Throw Me Overboard—Extract from the Autobiography of Christopher Columbus"; a cold recital of facts in a composition on "Lewis and Clark" takes on a glow of life when the topic becomes "A Page from My Diary Kept During the Lewis and Clark Expedition"; when the topic is merely "Bunker Hill" we get from the children a mere enumeration of events such as can be found in any history; but when the topic is changed to "Watching the Battle as an Aide to General Warren," the composition thrills with real excitement. The dispirited narrative when the composition is on "Arnold's Treason" becomes fascinating correspondence when it is turned into "The Letters Exchanged between Arnold and André." In this lesson one child impersonates Arnold and makes the offer of betrayal,

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and another is André who writes his acceptance and the details of the meeting.

The following composition is a good example of the kind of correlation that we must seek in composition:

Rosewood Cottage,
Fredericktown, Maryland,
September 23, 1863.

My Dear Joe:

No doubt you have read in the newspapers the heroic deed performed in this town. It no doubt has been the chief subject of conversation throughout the country. Of course some versions are greatly exaggerated, but the honor that has been given to that noble old woman she fully deserves. As I was an interested spectator and saw the occurrence from beginning to end, I shall briefly relate to you every detail as it truly happened.

I had been stopping for a few weeks at the home of my aunt in Fredericktown, a pleasant little village in the state of Maryland. One cool September morn I was leaving the house for one of my daily walks when I heard the steady tramp of marching feet. Turning, I beheld as far as the eye could see, soldiers in the gray uniform of the Confederate Army, General "Stonewall" Jackson at their head. We were expecting them, and earlier in the day every Union flag had been withdrawn, notwithstanding the protests of the Northern citizens. As the Southern army approached the house of Barbara Frietchie I saw her withdraw her head from the window, immediately to reappear with a large American flag, whose staff she placed in the window-sill. The flag slowly unfurled itself and proudly began to wave in the brisk morning breeze. As General Jackson went marching by, glancing from right to left, his quick eye soon noted the waving flag. "Halt!" he cried, and his troops stood fast. "Fire!" Out blazed the rifles. They shivered the sash and window-pane

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and rent the flag. As it fell from the shattered staff Barbara Frietchie snatched it, and, leaning far out of the window, waved it excitedly to and fro, while she exclaimed, "Strike, if you must, this old gray head, but spare your country's flag instead." The now excited throng raised a frenzied and mighty shout as it saw this aged and defenseless woman, the oldest inhabitant of the town, alone defending her country's flag. A shade of sadness and shame stole o'er the General's face, and he bowed his head upon his breast. Suddenly he lifted his head and, "Who touches a hair of yon gray head, dies like a dog. March on!" he said. All day long sounded the feet of the marching army. And all day long that free flag waved grandly o'er the heads of the Southern host.

Hoping this somewhat lengthy narrative will interest you, I remain Your true friend,

HARRY S.

In contrast to the above, let us see the following example of correlation, suggested as a model by the principal of one of our city schools:

London, England,
June 2, 1905.

DEAR WILLIAM:

I reached London at ten o'clock Monday morning and the first thing I went to see was Westminster Abbey, a very large church which is one of the largest in the world.

It was built by King Edward the Confessor in 1065 and the first great service was held in the Abbey Christmas Day of that year. A few weeks later King Edward took sick from old age and died and was buried there.

The Abbey is built in the form of a Latin cross and in the south transcript is the Poets' Corner, where there is a bust of Longfellow, a tablet to Shakespeare and a memorandum window to Lowell. King Henry added another

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chapel, in which there is the tomb of Queen Elizabeth, and the choir is as large as a good-sized church.

Your friend,

_____.

This composition is a stupid reproduction from the "Encyclopedia of Persons and Places"; the composition is dead and was written because it was an assigned task. The errors of speech, of grouping, and of facts which occur would not have been made if the child understood and felt what he was writing. All this is justified in the name of correlation for the principal's conference notes add: "The children are benefited not merely in the line of letter writing, but their language is improved and they gain valuable, curious, and interesting bits of information concerning different countries of the world, old and new."

What Is a Good Subject for Composition?—We can best sum up our inquiry concerning the choice of a subject for composition by noting the salient characteristic of a good "composition subject." The difference between a "good" subject and a "bad" one is the difference between "having something to say" and "having to say something." When the child is told to write on Westminster Abbey, he has to say something. All inspiration, all ideas that may be lurking in the mind are at once dispelled. When the child is writing because he has something to say, success is guaranteed because the subject of the entire composition is really "I." In the teaching of elementary composition a good subject allows the per-

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sonal pronoun of the first person to be the real if not the nominal subject.

In the light of this standard, how stupid and inane are the following models, offered by principals to teachers to be imposed on the children. They have all been gathered in the last three years from conference notes and direct "Orders to Teachers."

The East River Bridges

There are four great bridges connecting the boroughs of Manhattan and Brooklyn. Each of them is more than a mile in length. You can walk across them, or you can go over them in a car or a carriage.

From these bridges you can see steamers with their tall pipes and masts passing up and down the East River. Ferryboats, too, are seen going back and forth between the two boroughs.

The ferryboats used to be the only means of crossing from Brooklyn to New York. Now the bridges make it easier for the people to go from one borough to the other.

Coal

Hundreds and hundreds of years ago there were great forests. In these forests there were no insects; nothing was there but large trees. These trees sank into the earth and have become coal.

Men go down into the earth in small elevators to get the coal. These men are called miners. They have little lamps on their hats. It is very dark and dangerous down in the mines.

Many years ago children worked in the mines.

There are a great many halls in the mines. Coal is very opaque and it is shiny and very brittle.

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The Earthworm

The earthworm's body is made up of many segments. He has no bones. Fowls and birds eat him.

He needs no eyes because he lives in the dark earth. He destroys the roots of plants by eating them.

When he dies his body mixes with the soil and makes it richer.

Kindness

I should always treat others kindly. I should be especially kind to all the members of my own family.

I should be kind to all with whom I have anything to do, even if they are not such children as I would choose for companions.

If I have pets, I should be very kind to them.

How far superior are the following, personal expressions of the children!

The Sciences

Though I have read few books on science, I have noticed that, with but one exception, they merely gave the facts. For this reason I had almost formed an opinion that science was interesting, but that books on that subject were dry.

But when I came in contact with a certain book that opinion vanished into thin air. The cause of this sudden revolution of ideas was a book with the dull title—"The Sciences." Edward S. Holden is the author of it. Perhaps I liked the book because the topics were explained in nothing more nor less than a conversation. The illustrations, too, were the best I have ever seen. The experiment was always explained underneath the diagram.

I do not know why I grasp the facts better in reading

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conversation than facts. Maybe because the one, being more interesting, engages my attention more. Before reading the book I knew nothing of electricity. Now I know a little at least. The book did not take up much about electricity or I would have learned more. My only unfavorable criticism is that the children knew too much and spoke too well for their age. For instance, a girl of nine is not likely to know much about diving bells, planets, etc. But on the whole the book is excellent.

"Cherry Ripe"

"Cherry Ripe" is a little girl sitting on a huge boulder, with her little toes turned in and her little hands clasped. Beside her on the boulder, on a large leaf, are a number of ripe cherries. "Cherry Ripe" must be a very old picture, for her dress, shoes, gloves and hat are of the fashion of years gone by.

Around her neck is a scarf which looks like a bertha. Around her waist is the wide girdle. The long, full skirt comes to her ankles, out of which her little feet just peep. Her gloves come halfway up her arm.

Above her the May blossom and wistaria are twining and form an arch. Below her the lilies and tall grass come up and form a frame, but I think that the artist of this picture intended that she should be the sweetest and prettiest flower of them all.

It is evident, therefore, that a subject, per se, is neither good nor bad. The point of view and the interpretation of it always determine its value in elementary classes. The topic, "The Snowfall," gives a stupid and lifeless composition if the children are required to treat it in the following topics: In what season does it come? What temperature is neces-

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sary? Its relation to rain? What forms may the flakes take? What are the uses of snow in preserving plant life? etc. What is here offered the child is an adult's composition on snow, written from a scientific point of view with a serious aim. This is what snow may be to the teacher but it is not what snow is to the child. To him, it has no scientific cause, it justifies itself merely by the fact that it adds to his joy. How truly a boy's composition on snow is the following!

A Winter Day

"I'll bet you that we will have some snow this week," my friend had declared the day before the snowfall, and all of us agreed with him, for the wind was cold and biting and the clouds low and dark.

The next morning when I awoke I instantly saw that my friend had been right. The windows were frosted and the streets spotless white, as traffic had not yet begun. The adjoining roofs looked as if they had been covered with a huge sheet, while in the park every twig and branch was clothed in its winter garments. The street was as quiet as a graveyard, except for an occasional rattle of a truck as it rolled over the frozen pavement.

After eating breakfast and taking as few books as possible, I started off for school and met a number of my friends. "Hello, Willie," I cried to one of them, "how do you like the"—when, biff! came a snowball, which found lodgment in my ear. "Say, Is, how do you like the"—came derisively from Willie, while several boys laughed heartily at my misfortune. Then began a battle, which soon ended, as time was flying and we did not care to be late.

After school we met in our clubroom, and together we went to some building lots, where the snow was undisturbed, and began building a fort, for which we were to have a

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battle. When the fort was completed we chose sides, and I was put on the force which was to capture the fort. As I am not an accurate thrower, I was given the position of supplying snowballs. We soon overpowered the enemy and with a loud cheer took possession. We kept on playing until dark and then went home, hoping that there would be a blizzard during the night, which would insure some fun on the morrow.

The practical teacher may admit the possibilities of these results with classes in the upper part of the school course, but may insist that in the lower grades the expressions must be more or less formal and the content must possess a simplicity that seems insipid to the adult mind. It is evidently such lack of confidence in the imaginative products of children that prompted a principal of an elementary school to suggest the following models for fourth-year classes:

My Doll

My doll is a toy. It looks like a baby girl. Its head is made of china; its arms and legs are of plaster. The body of the doll is sawdust and rags. It has glass eyes that turn down when the doll is put to sleep.

The Trolley Car

The trolley car is a combined wagon and big machine. It moves by electric power. The motorman makes it go by turning a handle. The trolley car can draw heavy loads. It travels on wheels; these wheels turn on tracks. The machinery is under the car.

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Principals and teachers possessed of sympathetic insight see at once that to the child the doll is more than a composite of china, clay, glass and sawdust. It is a living object upon which are spent all the emotions of latent motherhood. In the second model the trolley car is not an object of wonder and awe, a monster of strength and speed. These models do not lift the child above the level of the commonplace or the cold realities of life. Contrast them with the following compositions written by second- and third-year children whose teacher's sympathy enabled her to stir the magic force of their imagination, so that the results are rich in imagery and poetic charm.

Where Does the Wind Begin?

The wind begins in the sky. The wind talks. What does the wind say? The wind says, "OOOOO."

Angelina L.

The wind begins in the clouds. The wind goes to sleep in the forest. John H.

I know where you live wind you live in the tree you are laughing wind. Albert V.

Where does the wind begin? A big man blows it out of his moth. Philip V.

The Robin's Song

I hear the robin singing in the trees. He sings "The butterflys are angel flowers." John R.

Wake up! Wake up! Wake up! It is robin Readbrest. Sunny warm weather is coming. Angelo S.

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The robin sings the spring is coming. The spring is waking the green grass. Little green buds are coming out of the trees. JOSEPH G.

The robin sings to the Daffadils, "open your yellow eyes." The Robin's sits on my window and tells me a secret of spring-time. MARY R.

I see the robin on the bushes. The robin is singing me a lovely song. The robin is telling me a secret. The flowers are bursting out of their buds because it is spring. CLARA B.

The robin sings Twee! Twee! Twee! The robin says "Appleblosoms come out of your buds." He tells me to be happy for spring is here. CORNELIUS O.

THE DARK

The dark keeps me warm. I see a lady dancing on the spark of the moon. The sun eats all the little people up. MARY R.

The dark is all around. I see emporers and kings marching by. The sun swallows them up. ALBERT P.

In the night it is dark. At night I see strange people and I hear strange music. In the morning the dark goes away. In the morning the strange people fade away. CLARA B.

SUGGESTED READING

The suggested reading for this chapter will be found at the end of Chapter VIII.

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CHAPTER V

COMPOSITION IN THE GRAMMAR GRADES
(Continued)

HOW SECURE ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCE: THE OUTLINE

The Tendency to Ramble.—Of the three basic problems that confront the grammar class teacher in composition, lack of subject-matter, lack of sequence and expressional limitations, we have considered only the first. Our immediate task is, therefore, a consideration of the problem of organization of ideas for rational expression. Children's compositions often lack this primary requisite, proper sequence of ideas. The child's tendency to ramble is responsible for his characteristic composition which lacks clearness and force. But we need not ascribe this weakness solely to children; adults, too, are often guilty of flagrant violations of the simple principle of logical sequence. Examine the trend of conversation in any ordinary gathering; every important topic is touched on and passed over in the "drift" of discussion because every new interest challenges attention. Class discussions of mature students are often examples of verbal spirals. Listen to the average adult as he tells of some incident or expounds

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some principle, in which there is no inherent sequence of events—what a heterogeneous composite of facts!

Illogical sequence of ideas and lack of coherence of thought are general failings. Teachers must not, therefore, be surprised to find these defects in children's work. Just as adults are unconscious of their limitations in this respect, so, too, are our immature pupils. The first problem that presents itself, therefore, is not to teach the principle of organization but to bring home the consciousness of its need and its importance. This can best be done by a method of *reductio ad absurdum.* After the child realizes his limitations, present the positive aspects of the lesson, teach him how to secure organization through the elaboration of the outline.

The Principle of Organization Taught by the Outline. —Let us suggest a lesson designed to bring home to the child the inherent tendency to ramble and to teach him a method of securing rational and systematic ordering of ideas. A descriptive composition on a well-selected topic can readily achieve this double end. With this purpose in view, the subject, "The Circus," was assigned to a fifth-year class. The children were made to understand that they must write such a description of the circus as would give one who has never seen it a clear idea of what he will see, and stir in him a desire to see the wonderful feats of skill and daring. Every child was then told to be ready to make a contribution of fact, each to tell what he would include in his own composition. The teacher took these items in the order in which they were sug-

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gested by children who were called upon promiscuously. Such a request for material brought the following data from the class: the daredevil acts, the animals, the great tent, the three rings, the large signs, the group of small tents, the crowds, highly colored pictures, the peddlers selling refreshments, the horse riders, the acrobats, the "barkers" at the "side-shows," the band, the apparatus, the funny sights, the freaks, the arrangement of seats, etc.

A few judicious questions and suggestions soon led the children to realize the utter absurdity of such an arrangement and to feel the need of systematic presentation of details. That done, the teacher elicited from the children a suitable sequence. "What would one see on first approaching the circus ground?" The conclusion reached by the class was: "The first paragraph ought to treat of the outside of the circus." The question, "What would one see on entering the circus inclosure after passing through the admission gate?" suggested to the class the theme for the second paragraph, In the Circus Grounds. The teacher then asked, "What would attract one's attention in the main tent?" and brought the children to a realization that the concluding paragraph must tell of the Great Circus Feats. The paragraphs with their respective headings were then written in separate columns on the blackboard and the first step in the development of the outline was completed.

The children then folded their papers into three divisions, each part to serve for the outline of a single paragraph. They were then led to take up each item

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in their original promiscuous list of data and decide for themselves in what paragraph it belonged. Thus the first contribution, "daredevil acts," is evidently part of the paragraph on The Great Circus Feats; the second, "the animals," part of the paragraph on Within the Circus Grounds, etc., until every fact worth including in the composition was properly placed. The result presented an appearance similar to the following:

Par. I. *Outside the Circus*	Par. II. *Within the Circus Grounds*	Par. III. *The Circus Feats*
1. stretch of canvas	7. the animals	2. the three rings
4. the great tent	1. group of small tents	1. the audience in seats
2. large signs	4. the peddlers selling refreshments	6. horse riders
5. the crowds	2. "barkers" at "side-shows"	5. acrobats
3. highly colored pictures	3. the band	7. the races
	5. the funny sights	4. the apparatus
	6. the freaks	3. the clown
		8. the daredevil acts

This done, the children were asked to examine the items in each paragraph and determine the logical position of each. With the aid of prefixed numbers, they worked out the sequence of ideas in each paragraph as is shown in the outline above.

Values of the Outline.—The values of such a lesson in sequence and organization are many and significant. It is obviously an effective means of teaching the

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child the need of rational sequence of thought, and the mode of grouping ideas for clear and forceful expression. The outline, properly used and elaborated, also trains the child in systematic thought, in clear and continued development of a line of thinking. As a formal classroom exercise for challenging the child's powers of judgment and concentration, it is excellent. Another inestimable value of the outline is that it is the most concrete and the most efficacious method at the teacher's command of teaching the paragraph, its meaning, its development and its unity. This is true because the nature of a paragraph can best be taught through a form of contrast. There must be a number of paragraphs developing under the pupils' hands, otherwise they carry away notions that are vague and inaccurate. Then, too, the child learns best through some form of motorization. The method suggested for teaching the outline enables the child to learn the organization of paragraphs by actually evolving a number of them simultaneously and noting the various basic ideas that determine the unity of each.

The Drill to Insure Mastery of the Outline.—Since the object in all language teaching is to habituate the correct form it is evident that vigorous and persistent drill must follow this lesson. This drill must be varied as well as thorough so that interest in the lesson will not be endangered. To this end we may suggest a number of exercises:

1. Similar topics are suggested to the class and the method is applied to each of these by the steps

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that were outlined in the model lesson. Such topics as, "Our Church," "The Polo Grounds," "Our School," "A Sporting Goods Window," "The East River Bridge," "The Peddler Selling Mechanical Toys," etc., allow for a simple application of the method learned to the new topic.

2. Incidents, descriptions, expositions and the like, which abound in the children's textbooks, are taken up one by one and analyzed into component ideas in order to lay bare the outline which the author had in mind when he wrote the particular selection under study. The children are taught to point out the topic of each paragraph and then to test its paragraph unity.

3. The next form of drill should take up varied topics of narrative, argumentative, expository and descriptive nature, which should be used in oral exercises. A few minutes after a new topic is announced the children must be ready to tell the number of paragraphs they would use in developing it and the theme of each paragraph. When a tentative set of paragraphs has been accepted the children must quickly evolve an appropriate content for each and offer it to the class orally, when called up. After the last paragraph is given, a new topic is announced and the same rapid oral drill takes place.

The subject given to a 6A grade in such a drill was, "The Breakdown of the Trolley Car." By skillful leading and emphasis of correct answers the teacher elicited from the class the following development:

Par. 1. The Trolley Car Collides with a Wagon.

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Par. 2. Impatience of the Passengers.

Par. 3. Examination of the Extent of the Accident and Attempt at Repairs.

Par. 4. Arrival of the Emergency Wagon and the Repair Crew.

These four paragraph headings were put on the board and attention was then directed to the development of each one. In attacking the first one for elaboration, the children were able to work out a good opening sentence. After a few colorless attempts in which the teacher indicated the cause of the weakness, a sentence offered was, "While I sat in a Third Avenue trolley, impatient at the slowness, the car came to a sudden standstill." The teacher's commendation of the opening sentence soon provoked from another child, " 'What terrible service! What a snail car this is,' I said to myself, when all of a sudden there was a crash and the car stopped with a terrible jerk"; and from a third, "No trolley car travels so fast as when the motorman loses control of it." One development of this first paragraph, as given orally, was, "We were all shaken up a bit but soon recovered from the fright and the noise of crashing window-panes. There was great excitement for a minute as the people rushed to the doors. When they realized that the danger was over they became calm and went to their seats again. It seemed that the wagon that collided with our car got the worse of it."

Paragraph number 2, on the "impatience of the passengers," brought sentences which told of the strain-

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ing of necks, of complaints, of people who left in disgust, of women who wanted their fares back, and of men who lost themselves in newspapers. The third paragraph dealt with the examination of the accident by the motorman and the conductor, their quarrel with the wagon driver who caused the accident, their conference, their futile attempt at repair, and then their telephoning for help. The concluding paragraph, developed orally in the same way, told of the arrival of the emergency wagon, the business-like procedure with which these expert workmen set to work, the policeman taking notes, the final repair and the relief of having started again.

All this work was oral; only hints and outlines of paragraphs were jotted down either on the board or on the children's cards. Every child's answers were examined and the class as a whole passed upon them, deciding whether particular facts were appropriate in the paragraph under consideration, whether the sequence of paragraphs was correct, etc. In the same way the following topics might be treated: "A Sporting Goods Window," "A Mounted Policeman," "Joe, the Pretzel Man," "A Beggar," "Report of a Game," "An Athletic Meet," etc. Three or four of these topics could be taken up orally in one period.

Cautions in Developing Outlines.—There are common but erroneous practices in developing outlines that we must constantly guard against if we are to secure maximum results in this type of exercise. We must now turn to these cautions in this form of language work.

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1. *The Outline Must Be the Child's Outline.*—Every part of the lesson must be the result of the children's self-activity; they must suggest every fact in the outline; they must evolve the number of paragraphs; they must judge each item and decide upon its place in the general organization. Unless every act of judgment is performed by the pupils, the maximum results of such a lesson cannot be realized.

2. *Too Many Details in the Outline Must Be Avoided.*—It is important that the outline should not be laden with too many minute details. There should be a general organization, a broad suggestion of the line of development and of the proper sequence. An outline that gives an enumeration of petty details crushes individuality, kills spontaneity and robs the final composition of its best expressional elements.

3. *Avoid a Stereotyped Class Outline.*—A final word of warning counsels that we avoid such outlines as will give a set of compositions bearing remarkable similarity to one another in every detail—exercises that seem as if they were printed from the same type and cast in the same mold. How can we guard against this slavish imitation? How can we introduce individuality of expression and variety of form?

How to Secure Variety in the Outlines.—1. *Outlines Should Not Be Copied Verbatim.*—Despite the fact that the class as a whole or a particular division may be writing on the same subject and from the same general outline, variety of expression and individuality in the final product need not be stifled.

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After the outline is elaborated and the final form is shown on the blackboard, it should be erased and the children should be required to construct their own, each child thus producing an outline reflecting his own point of view and his own individuality. No matter how retentive the children may be, a delightful variety can be secured.

2. *Encourage Variety of Grouping.*—After the children have learned the *modus operandi* in the construction of an outline, the teacher must not rest content with one grouping of facts. Show the children that the number of paragraphs is not fixed, provided the items in each are shifted and rearranged under their logical heading. Variety will invariably result. Thus in a composition on "Our School," let it be supposed the visitor arrives in a carriage and enters at once, then what is the sequence of paragraphs? Evidently, paragraph 1, Interior Structure; paragraph 2, Decorations; paragraph 3, Activities; paragraph 4, Exterior. Or, the visitor on entering is attracted by the work that is being done; hence the paragraphing is, paragraph 1, Activities; paragraph 2, Structure That Makes This Possible; paragraph 3, Teaching Apparatus; paragraph 4, Decorations; paragraph 5, Exterior Structure, etc. Each child may therefore select that grouping which appeals to him most.

In the description of the circus the teacher and the children should evolve other forms of paragraph development than the one suggested in the lesson, viz., paragraph 1, The Parade Before the Opening of the Circus; paragraph 2, The Circus Grounds; paragraph

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3, The Circus Performance; or, paragraph 1, The Circus Grounds; paragraph 2, The Performance in the Main Tent; paragraph 3, The Side-shows; or, paragraph 1, The Preparation Before the Circus Comes to Town; paragraph 2, How the Circus Is Put Up; paragraph 3, The Rehearsals; paragraph 4, The Performance. A child who experiences difficulty with one arrangement of paragraphs may find another suggestive and interesting. He must therefore be given free choice and be allowed to follow a paragraph grouping that is entirely original, should his ingenuity suggest one.

3. *Allow Personal Choice of Details.*—Once the paragraph themes have been suggested, teachers must allow children perfect freedom in the choice of details. Thus in the paragraph on The Circus Feats in the composition on "The Circus," children may omit any data offered in the outline and incorporate any other feats of skill and daring that have greater attraction for them. What children are to say about the various suggestions in the outline about the "side-shows," "the barkers," "the acrobats," "the clown," etc., should never be indicated. Whatever the word suggests to their minds they should write, unhampered by injudicious direction and dictation, and thus again offset the undesirable sameness of class productions.

4. *Encourage Variety of "Attacking and Closing" the Subject.*—Another means of securing variety of form and showing personality in expression is to elicit a variety of beginnings and endings. The com-

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positions on "Our School" showed the following in a 5B class:

1. "I am very proud of my school for it is so attractive."
2. "Every visitor who comes to this section of the city is attracted by our school."
3. "I praised my school so much that my uncle finally made up his mind to visit it. I met him at the teachers' entrance."
4. "One of the very beautiful buildings in this city is . . ."
5. "My country cousin was never so much surprised in all his life as he was when he visited my school."

Then came a contrast between the city school and the country school.

5. *Avoid the Wordy Outline.*—A final suggestion for securing variety in the organization of composition is to suggest each item in the outline in only a word or two. Outlines made up of sentences or long phrases are bad, for the children soon learn to supply a few predicates, an adjective or an occasional modifying phrase or clause and the composition is complete. The scantier the outline, the better.

How Closely Shall the Outline Be Followed?—A final problem which arises in the course of the employment of the outline is the extent to which the children shall consciously follow it. The answer cannot be didactic nor positive. It all depends upon (a) the nature of

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the composition, and (b) the age and capabilities of the children. When the topic is one of exposition, or narration, or argumentation, then logical sequence is exceedingly important in securing clearness and force. But in writing a description of a person, a sunset, a brook, or a quaint room, the ultimate aim is to give a lasting and vivid impression of the picture; here the choice of detail rather than the sequence of facts is the vital problem, hence the outline need only be followed in its general trend.

As far as the child's age and capabilities are concerned, it may be safe to assert that through the sixth year of the elementary course, the outline must be a conscious prop in composition, and must inevitably take a considerable part of the oral period which prepares for the final expressional exercise. But thereafter, it should gradually begin to assume a minor place in the preparatory period, not that the outline is now less important but because a habit of mind should have been formed in the fifth and sixth years of the school course. Where the outline is properly taught and impressed through drill of sufficient frequency during these two years, the child should be able in the later years of the school course to organize facts without aid or direction. Pupils of the seventh and eighth years when confronted by a composition subject, should habitually think: (a) What is the subject as a whole, i. e., what mass of facts comes under it? (b) What are the best groupings of these facts, i. e., how many paragraphs do I want and what are they? (c) How shall I organize each paragraph?

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and (d) what is an appropriate opening sentence and closing sentence? Before writing his composition, the child should give evidence of having accomplished this organization. The outline should be made a part of the composition and may even be placed at the head of the sheet.

Supplementary Means of Developing Power of Organization.—In addition to the formal lessons on the use of the outline, various supplementary methods can be incorporated in all periods for developing in children a sense of logical organization. After a story is read to the children, or by them, a few minutes may profitably be spent in eliciting from the pupils the outline that must have guided the author. Various games and processes, that make up the work of the physical training and the manual training periods respectively, may be submitted to careful analysis, and the steps in the procedure listed in proper sequence. In all lessons the teacher should take occasion, in the summary, to call the attention of the pupils to the organization of the facts that guided her in planning the topic for the period. Thus, after a geography, a history or a nature-study lesson, the teacher naturally calls upon the class to summarize the most essential facts. As the lesson is retraced, step by step, by the children, the main topics and subtopics should be listed on the board. When this summary is completed, the children see the sequence which governed the organization of the lesson. Then, too, all study lessons can be made informal but nevertheless direct means of teaching children the art of organization. The child

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who studies his lesson in geography tries, first, to ascertain the meaning of the text and then to group the most important facts in a logical outline before committing to memory any of the data. These study lessons make unmistakable contributions to the child's growing sense of organization.

SUGGESTED READING

The suggested reading for this chapter will be found at the end of Chapter VIII.

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CHAPTER VI

COMPOSITION IN THE GRAMMAR GRADES
(*Continued*)

EXPRESSIONAL LIMITATIONS: THE MODEL

The method of teaching composition in the grammar grades, it was seen, must be governed by the basic difficulties which confront the teacher, viz., lack of content, lack of organization, and expressional limitations. The first two of the three have already been considered in detail in the preceding chapters. We must now turn to the third factor which makes children's work poor and the teacher's problem difficult —expressional limitations, which consist of (a) ungrammatical forms, (b) confused and awkward expressions, and (c) paucity of vocabulary of necessary words. Time and the influences of general education tend, in a measure, to overcome these three limitations and strengthen the child along these very weak lines, for as the child's education progresses he learns the primary laws of grammar, gradually acquires better expressions, and in the course of his daily reading, conversation, or study, enriches his limited stock of words. But all these modes are governed by chance. What specific means have we of bringing about progress in these directions? In the main, these are four:

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(1) *group teaching,* (2) *a wise use of the outline,* (3) *establishing an intimate relationship between grammar and composition,* and (4) *the use of the model.*

1. Group Teaching.—It is the common experience of all teachers that children usually vary greatly in expressional ability. Natural gifts seem to assert themselves in composition in most unmistakable terms. Some children are precocious in their expressional work, some are exceedingly good, while others seem hopelessly behind. The following compositions were written by two children in a seventh-year class. Both these boys had been in attendance the same time, came from about the same kind of home, and were in America about the same number of years.

KING JOHN

King John was a cruel king. He cared more for money than for his people. Sometimes he would torture people just to see them in pain. One day the barons rebelled and made him sign a paper called the Magna Carta. This gave them rights they never had and put King John under control.

KING JOHN

King John was a very crul. He did not care for nobody but himself. People were very angry on him. They gave him a peace of paper wich was called magn Cart wich he was to sign to the peple.

What a ludicrous attempt, therefore, is the composition lesson which assigns the same topic to all chil-

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dren, presents the new principle simultaneously to them and expects the same standard of result from such varying abilities! What a wrong to neglect those able and gifted in expression or to stultify their power by dragging them down to the level of the mediocre! How stupid to expect the backward and hopelessly deficient to keep up with the standard of general class progress! When shall we realize that indiscriminate class teaching which neglects personal aptitudes or weaknesses and individual needs, stifles unmeasured ability on the one hand and perpetuates hopeless ignorance on the other! The need for group teaching, for teaching according to personal capacity, is more urgent in composition than in any other elementary school subject. The possibilities for grouping are here more numerous and the conveniences for group teaching are greater, yet teachers are less prone to group in this subject than in others. The difficulties that a pupil encounters in composition are peculiarly personal, hence, only as we try to approximate individual work in composition, will the child outgrow his personal expressional limitations.

2. **The Outline.**—A good outline, it was shown, is a great help toward clear and direct thinking. But expression follows thought; hence, clearness of expression is the inevitable sequel to clearness of thinking. The outline, by systematizing the child's ideas, guarantees the necessary antecedent of clear and forceful expression.

3. **The Intimacy of Grammar and Composition.**—A third factor that seeks to minimize and correct ex-

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pressional limitations is the close relationship of grammar to composition. The ideal course in grammar is so planned that it emphasizes those parts that can be of service in writing, or can become standards of judgment and correction; the ideal grammar lesson has its origin in the faults committed by the children in their composition and finds its application in correction of these same faults. For purposes of illustration let us suppose that an examination of a set of compositions shows a tendency toward sentences related in thought but independent in construction, giving a very amateurish and childish effect. Examples of this prevalent weakness are, "Columbus was a bold navigator. He never feared to sail unknown seas"; "The Civil War was a long and bloody conflict. It brought untold human misery." A number of sentences similar in looseness of structure are put on the board. By a few well-chosen questions the teacher elicits that each pair of sentences has the same subject and that they can readily be united into one. The ever ready "and" will undoubtedly be offered but again the children can be led to see that the same looseness of structure is still present. If no pupil can combine the first two sentences to produce a suspended sentence, the teacher offers, "Columbus, who was a bold navigator, never feared to sail unknown seas." As the loose sentence, "Columbus was a brave navigator and never feared to sail unknown seas," is compared with the suspended one, the children readily feel the difference in force and the superior ability of the latter to command attention to the very last

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word. It is now a simple matter to elicit from the class that the word "who" made possible this improvement in their loose sentence structure. In the same way the succeeding pair of sentences are taken up and the children led to see the value of such words as "which, who, whose, whom," etc. The question, "What shall we study in our grammar lesson to-day?" brings the answer, "The words, *who, which, whose, whom.*" The lesson is thus justified, a vital motive that prompts dynamic interest is supplied, and a definite aim is established for the period. At the end of the lesson each child carefully reads his last composition and improves every loose construction by a form of the relative pronouns he has learned. Such lessons make grammar real and enable the child to improve his speech by intelligent self-criticism and correction.

THE MODEL

The most potent single factor in elevating standards of expression is the model. Its place in the teaching of composition must receive our attention for the remainder of the chapter.

4. Basic Principle of Teaching Language Through a Model.—The psychological principle which justifies the emphasis that is to-day placed on the model as an aid in the teaching of composition, is the oft-quoted dictum, "Language is learned through imitation." The model is studied appreciatively until its appeal sinks deep and becomes part of the pupils, so that unconsciously a child reproduces its wording and its phrasing in his own speech. This method of teaching

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composition based on imitation is not a process of instruction peculiar to the school; it is the method followed by writers of the first rank. Stevenson tells us, "I always kept two books, one to read, one to write in. . . . Whenever I read a book or a passage that pleases me, I must always sit down and ape that quality. . . . I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth. . . . That is the way to learn to write." Many of the great masters have developed technique by this method. We see then that we need not concern ourselves very vitally with those teachers and principals who refuse to use the model because "it means imitation and a curbing of individuality of expression." Properly used the model discourages that peculiar individuality of expression that children can well afford to lose.

The Selection of the Model.—The proper choice of a model will often determine the spirit, the enthusiasm, the efficiency of the lesson itself. What consideration should guide the teacher in making the selection for a particular class?

1. *The Model Must Be Above the Children in Tone but not in Comprehension.*—The trite advice, "Use models of plain everyday English," has little to justify its application. The model must present no thought difficulty; it must be on the child's level of comprehension and interest. But its tone and spirit must be literary and lofty, so that the child consciously looks up to the model. Dr. William H. Maxwell, Superintendent of New York City Schools, therefore, cautions teachers not to make up their own models.

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He insists that their source should be of some standard literary repute.

But it is important, however, that the teacher realize that there is a sharp distinction between the literary standard of the child whose appreciation is crude in the extreme, and the literary requirement of the adult whose linguistic taste has been refined through years of cultural pursuits. Judged by literary canons, a particular selection may possess unusual merit, but its very excellence may make it inappropriate for the pupil of school age. We must see the model through the child's eyes and interpret it in terms of the child's interests, otherwise we may thrust the child into deep waters from which he cannot emerge, and he drowns in utter discouragement. O'Shea, in his "Linguistic Development," warns us therefore:

> The pupil must feel the limitations in his present equipment before he can appropriate readily and effectively the means of extending it. So it is poor policy to give pupils in the seventh and eighth years and even in the high school, models in literary expression taken from the involved writings of Milton, Shakespeare, Bacon, Tennyson, Addison and the like. The formal grammatical and rhetorical textbooks are full of complicated but excellent examples of expression, judged from the standpoint of the appreciative adult, culled from the world's great literature, the aim being to illustrate every quality of strength and grace and efficiency in style by the best instances to be found anywhere. But there is an error here which runs through much of our educational theory; what is logically "best" in adult appreciation is interpreted to be most suitable for the child at every stage of his development.

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Bearing this warning in mind, the following letter of the late Richard Mansfield to his son Gibbs meets the first requisite of an appropriate model. It is charming in its simplicity. Its diction, its force, and its ease raise it to a literary plane.

Private Car 80,
Colorado Springs, May 27.

MY DEAR, DEAR BOY:

I received your beautiful letter, and I was proud to think that you could dictate it yourself. Of course, you want to go fishing, so does your Dada, and also to go rowing, but he is sorry you do not want to play Indian. Playing Indian is great fun, for you carry a gun or a bow and arrow, and you lope all day long after somebody without stopping to eat or drink, and, when at last you find this somebody that you have been looking for you get down on your stomach and wriggle like a snake without making any noise until you reach him.

Then you give a dreadful whoop and cut off his hair, if he has any, and hang it up in your wigwam.

There are lots of other things you can do, but it is time for me to talk of something else now. I am sitting in my car and the lamps are lighted and are covered with pink shades, and outside it is raining (it wouldn't be pleasant if it were raining inside, would it?) and the drip, drip, drip of the rain on the roof makes me feel very cosy and sleepy. If you were here, I would give you some beautiful marbles to play with, and you could sit on the rug and roll them.

To-day it rained so hard that all the little streams drank so much water that they grew and grew and grew until they became giants, and then they were proud and naughty, and took the bridges and the rails in their quivering hands and tore them away, so that your Dada's train could not go any farther. When you are a grown-up engineer you will build

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bridges and rails that the giant streams can't tear away, won't you?

On Sunday I went for a drive with Mr. Dillon, and we went to a spring where real soda water bubbles out of the ground, and then drove home through a place called the Garden of the Gods, where there are rocks formed by Nature to look like eagles and frogs and little old men and all kinds of people and things, and we saw a little baby donkey, a real one, and your Dada bought it for his little boy, and if he is as good as he always is (not the donkey, but the boy), then Dada's boy can ride and drive it next year, please God.

And now Dada kisses his boy just one hundred and one times and fifty and a half are for mudder. Jefferson is bringing Dada's supper, and Dada is going to eat it and thank the Lord he has such a good boy and such a dear mudder.

DADA.

Compare this literary letter, charming and appealing in its simplicity but essentially on the child's level of comprehension and interest, with the following flat and insipid models offered to teachers by principals who believe that "models must be on the plane of everyday English."

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Jack lived with his mother. She was a poor widow. A giant had killed her husband and stolen her gold.

One day the widow told Jack to sell her cow. The foolish boy sold it for a few beans. His angry mother threw the beans out of the window. The next morning Jack found a beanstalk growing outside his window. It seemed to reach the sky.

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THE GOLDEN TOUCH

There was once a king named Midas. His little daughter's name was Marygold.

The king loved gold very much. So he was given the golden touch. Then everything he touched became gold.

At first this made the king feel very happy. One day he touched his little daughter. She became a golden statue. Then the king was glad to get rid of the golden touch.

These pseudo-models lack zest and inspiration; they are entirely devoid of literary merit and cannot therefore stir in the child a spark of enthusiastic appreciation. How inferior does the second selection appear in contrast with the composition written by a fourth-year child in spite of the repressive influence of the principal's literary sense.

KING MIDAS

Many hundreds of years ago there lived in a far-off land a king whose name was Midas. He had a beautiful little daughter named Marygold. The king loved her very much.

Midas was very greedy. One day, a fairy came to him and told him he could have any wish he pleased. The king said, "Oh, kind fairy, please give me the gift that everything I touch should turn into gold." The beautiful fairy touched him with her wand, and said, "King Midas, you may have your wish." Then Midas was very happy.

His happiness did not last very long. He wanted to eat a piece of bread—it turned to gold. He touched an apple—it turned to gold.

One day he was in his treasure house counting his gold. His little daughter Marygold came in to kiss him good morn-

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ing. He kissed her and she turned to gold. Then the king fell to the floor in a swoon. When he recovered he wished that he could lose the gift. Soon the fairy came back and Midas begged her to take back the gift. She took it back and changed everything back to its proper form.

YETTA H—— 4A

The two models quoted fail badly because they violate the very first of the cardinal principles of selection,—they are not above the children in tone and spirit.

2. *The Content of the Model Must Appeal to the Child's Interest.*—The model must at all times reflect the child's life and environment. However beautiful in form, however lofty in appeal and literary in style, the content and not the form of the model will, in the last analysis, attract the child. We must be sure that there is something active, urgent and personal in the selection that is presented for analysis and study. The two models that follow illustrate the point under consideration,—the first, however, by its neglect of this requisite quality.

HOW TO PLAY TENNIS

Tennis is a game played very much by both men and women. A ball, a racket for each player, a net, and a marked court are needed.

The ball is hit with the racket by the first player. He must place the ball within certain lines or the hit counts against him. If the ball is placed properly, the second player must hit it with his racket. The object is to keep hitting the ball and placing it within the lines. The player, who has the highest count, wins.

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How "flat, stale, and unprofitable" is this impersonal, lifeless explanation when compared with the following personal, active, and natural exposition!

How I Built Davie's Wagon

Little David is but six years of age, and like many other youngsters is determined to have his way. It was a hot day in June and David wanted to have some fun. His heart was set on a wagon. He stepped up to his hard working father and said, "Papa, make me a wagon." I, a friend of the neighboring carpenter, was standing nearby. So Mr. Abelman, turning to me, said, "If you don't mind, George, here is a box, some tools and a plank. I am confident you like carpenter work. Go into the back yard and make Dave a wagon." Having nothing to do, I agreed to this. I secured wheels and set to work.

The first thing I did was to nail a plank to the bottom of the box exactly in the center, extending it a yard beyond the front of the box. I next nailed on the back axle and attached its wheels. I afterward took the front axle and nailed it to a small piece of flat board. I bored a hole through the center of the plank, three inches from its end, and another through the small piece of flat board on which the axle was nailed. Then I put a large screw through these holes so as to make the steering apparatus. Last of all I attached the front, smaller wheels and a cord to both ends of the axle. Now everything was complete; the wagon was finished and a pretty good job it was.

You can imagine David's joy after the completion of the wagon. He owned a wagon he could call his own and made the other little fellows envious.

3. *The Model Must Illustrate Only One Specific Principle.*—The model that exemplifies many principles of composition usually teaches nothing, for in

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the end it entails diffusion of attention and results in no permanent acquisition. Select a model because it shows how to describe a person, how to describe a place, how to tell an incident, how to write a dialogue, how to give a clear exposition, etc. At the end of the period the child must consciously feel that at least one lesson has been made central, at least one principle of composition has been learned and mastered.

4. *Models Should Be Reasonably Short.*—Another consideration governing a good choice of the model is its length. Models should be short, seldom exceeding two hundred and fifty words. The long model dissipates energy and attention and weakens the point to be taught. The short model allows for closer concentration on the vital point, deeper and more lasting impression, and easier grasp of the underlying principle that is involved.

5. *All Models Need Not Come from "Reputed Literary Sources."*—A final suggestion counsels that we use the best compositions of the last class as models for the succeeding pupils. This is in direct contradiction to the prevalent belief that all models must have "reputed literary sources." The model of "reputed literary source" may discourage; its very perfection may preclude any attempt on the part of the child to imitate and approximate it. In all practical higher endeavors in life we usually strive to attain the possible, not the perfect. Confronted with the perfect literary model the child may feel his helplessness and thus put forth no effort in his discouragement. One of the great limitations of the old en-

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graved copy-books was that the copy represented perfection; hence failure seemed to the child a foregone conclusion. But with the product of one's own classmates as a model, a child is roused to healthy emulation, for the goal is possible and probable.

General Treatment of the Model.—Now that we have justified the use of the model and have considered the guiding principles in making the most appropriate selections, we must turn our attention to the method of presenting it to the class. To make it easier to follow the lesson through its progressive steps, we must take a specific illustration and refer all procedure to it. "Gellert," a narrative model offered by Sykes in his "Elementary English Composition" (p. 16), will serve this purpose admirably.

GELLERT

Prince Llewellyn had a favorite greyhound named Gellert, gentle at home and valiant in the chase. One day the prince was about to go hunting and blew his horn for his dogs. All his dogs came save Gellert. He blew again and called but Gellert did not come. He could wait no longer and set off without his favorite. He had little success and returned to his castle vexed at his ill luck.

As he came up to the castle-gate Gellert came bounding out to meet him. But the prince noticed that his lips and fangs were dripping with blood. The prince was startled. He thought of his infant child who often played with the dog. Rushing to the child's room, he found everything in disorder, the cradle overturned and daubed with blood. More and more terrified at the signs of conflict, he sought for his child but in vain. At last he felt sure that the hound had destroyed his son, and with the cry, "Monster, thou hast

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devoured my child," he plunged his sword into the greyhound's side.

As Gellert gave his dying yell, a cry was heard from beneath the overturned cradle and there Llewellyn found his child unharmed and just awakened from sleep, and beside him, torn in pieces and covered with blood, lay the body of a great gaunt wolf.

Llewellyn was grieved to the heart; but nothing could bring his faithful dog to life again. He buried him by the castle wall, and over his grave he raised a great cairn of stones so that every passer-by might see it and remember his story. And the place to this day is called Beth Gellert or the Grave of Gellert.

The Model in the Hands of the Children.—Each child must be supplied with a copy of the model. Merely to hear the model read by the teacher will not suffice for the auditory appeal is of the very weakest. To see it on the blackboard may help, but too many children cannot see all of the writing and proper concentration is impossible with the disconcerting circumstances attending such a presentation. With the model in the hands of each child, the proper appeal can be made and the necessary concentration and attention can be given.

The Reading by the Teacher.—The lesson itself should begin with a reading of the model by the teacher, the children following on their individual copies. To call upon the children is not the most advisable procedure; they stumble and hesitate, new words confuse, new constructions fail to arouse proper meaning and the necessary expression is lost; all these circumstances militate against the success of the les-

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son. The teacher's reading gives meaning and spirit to the selection; the expression of the reading will give comprehension even where words and phrases may be unfamiliar to the children. The lesson is thus begun with proper interest and attention and the proper attitude toward the work is aroused.

The Outline of the Model Developed.—The next step is to trace the structure and the organization of ideas in the model. With this end in view the teacher must elicit the outline of the model. The children read it silently and then give (1) the name of each paragraph by pointing out the topic sentence. (2) They then analyze the contents of each paragraph and test for paragraph unity. Is the topic sentence justified? Does every sentence in the paragraph treat of the theme announced in the topic sentence? (3) Attention is next directed to the sequence of the whole series of paragraphs. What guided the author in making his paragraphs follow as they do? (4) The children are finally asked to consider, What are the opening and the closing sentences? Are they effective? Why?

The Comprehension of the Model.—Now that the children have seen the organization of the model and the development of the theme, the detailed study is begun. The teacher must see that all necessary words and expressions are made familiar, that unusually effective expressions are emphasized, and that the children are led to imitate them orally and to attempt variations upon them. Let us refer to "Gellert," the illustration selected. Do the children know the meaning of

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"greyhound," "save Gellert," "fangs," "conflict," "devoured," "gaunt," and "cairn"? If they do not, all further study must wait for the acquisition of this information. "How shall it be given?" the teacher asks—"through the dictionary, through the context, through sentences, through word study and etymology, or through direct telling?" Any method will suffice, but in the main, the direct telling, the much condemned didactic method, must be used, for the governing object of the lesson is not to study words but to carry away the spirit and the form of the model as a whole. Since mere words must be subordinated to the thought and its expression, the shortest method is the best.

Drill on Superior Forms of Expressions.—The teacher now turns attention to the best phrases in the model and tries to bring out their force and their worth as media of expression. Thus, "valiant in the chase," is subjected to a little exercise like the following: "How would you express the same thought?" To this query of the teacher, children in a fifth-year class replied, "Brave while out hunting," "Courageous while out hunting," "Fearless while chasing the deer," "Brave while pursuing the deer," etc. The statements offered by the class as equivalents were compared with the original expression in the model and the children were led to note its superiority. To cap the point and make the drill effective, insist on original application. Let the children give a list of situations where the phrase can be applied, e. g., to the fireman, policeman, soldier, sailor, etc. Then have

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them construct sentences about these situations, using the expression that is to become part of their vocabularies, *e.g.:* "The fire captain was *valiant* at the scene of the rescue of the old woman," "The policeman was *valiant in* the pursuit of the burglar," "The general was *valiant in* the attack," etc., until an effective impression has been made and the expression is on the highroad to the goal of habit. A similar drill can be given on "dripping blood," "vexed at his ill luck," "The prince was startled," "but in vain," etc.

But the teacher may object, "When will the oral period come to an end if each good expression be made focal in such a drill?" Much time would undoubtedly be consumed. Since the time is necessarily limited, we must sacrifice the number of expressions studied to the thoroughness of the drill. The teacher must select only two or three of the dozen admirable phrases and make sure that these become part of the children. If each model could be made to contribute two or three of these expressions toward the child's permanent linguistic possessions, each term would witness unmistakable progress.

Emphasis on the Principle of the Composition Illustrated by the Model.—The next point, and the most important part of the lesson, is the emphasis on the specific point that led to the selection of the model, the drill on the principle of composition which the model illustrates.

If the model was selected to illustrate an argumentative composition, then it becomes the aim of the teacher to show the children that the organization re-

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quires successively, (1) that the topic or the question be stated, (2) that the outline of the arguments be foreshadowed, (3) that the first argument be posited, (4) that the proof for the first argument be given, (5) that the following arguments and their proofs be stated in the same way, (6) that the conclusion be drawn to bring home the contention that is upheld throughout. In the following composition, these points are attempted after a study of the model. The child's product lacks much that is desirable, but it is nevertheless a good statement of what the child feels and thinks.

RESOLVED: THAT EXAMINATIONS ARE UNNECESSARY

1 Examinations are given every term to test the pupil of his or her knowledge of different subjects. It is done from the lowest grade in the primary to the highest department in college. The question arises, "Are these necessary?"

2 I firmly believe that examinations are entirely unnecessary because, first, they make the pupil nervous, and

3 second, marks can be obtained in other ways. When the pupil is in the examination hall, things taught her leave her head entirely, therefore they are not a fair test of

4 the pupil's knowledge. It is much better to count the pupil's recitations during the term than for them to be sent on short notice to the examination hall, as one is more familiar and feels more at home in one's own classroom. It's hurtful to the pupil's health as it works the pupil up to a nervous pitch and many pupils become very ill after them.

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My opponents may say that the pupil has to be marked so that the teachers may know whether he or she is fit to go on to another grade, but that can be done by marking the pupil on his or her daily work, and averaging up the marks on the different subjects at the end of the term. Then again the other side might say that the pupil might become more nervous standing up and facing the class while reciting than just answering an examination paper, but again I say one feels and is more at home in the classroom and with the teacher than in the examination hall. They also might say that if one is not healthy enough to stand an examination they should not be at school, but it is just the examinations that make them unhealthy and nervous after the examinations. ANNETTE H—— 8B.

When the model is used to teach the art of exposition, emphasis is laid on (1) how the topic to be expounded is announced, (2) the importance of careful sequence, (3) the need of sentences that are distinguished by their simplicity and clearness. As a final point we may mention that the child should be taught the test of good exposition. To do this let the children follow out the directions and see if the result is the desired end. Thus, in the composition on "How to Lay off a Baseball Diamond," the child should actually "lay off," to a scale, the measurements and the lines on a sheet of paper, and test the clearness of the exposition and the logic of the sequence. Whenever an exposition is written, each pupil should be required, if feasible, to express diagrammatically or graphically the directions in his own composition as a test of the efficiency of his written work.

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In the case of narration, the analysis of the model must be such as will reveal the four component elements of a good narrative:

1. The Plot, "The What?"
2. The Characters, "The Who?"
3. Situation, "The Where—The When?"
4. The Purpose, "The Why?"

The introduction must give the "who," the "where" and "when," and the "why"; the succeeding paragraphs offer the "what," the plot. The child thus learns that the organization of a narrative lies in the sequence of events as they happened in time, that the series of occurrences begins with the preliminary events and the setting of the scene, and gradually works up to the climax which in its turn is followed by the denouement, the surprise in outcome or ending. An analysis of the model on "Gellert" reveals, very readily, this structure. Of course, it is obvious that not all these elements and principles of composition would be taught in any one period. A whole lesson may well be spent learning how to write a climax. The children analyze the model and note that the climax is preceded by rather slow movement, long sentences, discursive style, that the climax has maximum movement and is made up of a number of short sentences and independent clauses. Thus, in the model studied, we find, "The prince was startled . . . rushed to the child's room . . . everything in disorder . . . cradle overturned . . . daubed with blood" . . . Every verb is an action word. This is followed by a series of imitations by the children, in which

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they take first the same subject and then similar subjects for their themes. The teacher takes one or two topics and gives his climax as he would write it; the children then try their own. Thus, the teacher offers, as the climax in a composition on "A Fire":

The smoke was now curling out of each window. It became blacker and denser. The crash of breaking glass filled the air. Above the din, a sharp cry rang out. A helpless woman stood on the third floor fire-escape. A sheet of flame now leaped out of the story above. The upper structure was almost entirely enveloped. "Help! Help!" was taken up by all bystanders. But help was almost beyond human power.

The children are asked to suggest a similar situation and the teacher offers to give the climax in appropriate form. Suppose that the children suggest "The Fire Engine and the Child." The teacher proceeds:

The sharp shrill whistle of the engine is piercing the air. The heavy wagon is rounding the corner. The strained face of the driver changes. He pulls frantically at his reins. What can be the matter? See! . . . a child in the roadway! The mother's screams ring out wildly. The bystanders are in dismay. Horror-stricken they stand motionless. I shudder to see what the next moment will bring!

As the children's imaginations conjure up new situations of hairbreadth escapes and breathless excitement, the teacher gives, on the moment, the fitting climax. This arouses great enthusiasm and the teacher need only challenge the children to imitate this construction in new topics that he may assign. A com-

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petition is started, to see which pupil can, by using short sentences and independent clauses with action verbs, give the greatest feeling of suspense and excitement in the situations of "A Man Overboard," "The Stranded Ship," "Columbus Sighting Land," "Pocahontas Saving Captain John Smith," "Crashing into an Iceberg," and the like. Only as one point is made focal in the lesson, harped on, imitated, and repeated from varied views and angles, is the child's language ability developed.

In the same manner we treat in the formal lesson, a model description. Now the teacher carefully brings home the fact that in effective description we should give: (1) *the general impression,* "As I looked up, a most delightful spectacle confronted me," etc.; (2) *the point of view,* "There, before me, stretching to the right and left, lay a beautiful sheet of water"; (3) *the general comparison,* "It resembled those charming oval lakes that stud the landscape of Northern Maine"; (4) *choice of details,* use of color and picture words—those words and details which emphasize the calm of the lake, and the feeling of quiet satisfaction, and which give the most vivid picture; (5) *the lasting impression,* "It was one of those haunts of Nature where peace and contentment reign."

Here again, we must remember that for any one lesson only one point is selected and the drill is given to make that a permanent acquisition. Let us suppose that details and color words are to be emphasized in the study of a particular model of description. "Der Kleine Johannes" is studied and the children are

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led to see that all details, all words, suggest tranquillity, peace of nature and of man. A new topic is given, the dominant characteristics are elicited and suitable adjectives listed on the board in preparation for the drill.

Topic	*Characteristics*	*Adjectives*
1. A Rapid River	1. movement mass of water noise	1. noisy turbulent rushing whirling, etc.
2. A Snowfall	2. slow quiet calm pure	2. Same words as characteristics
3. A Beggar	3. pity fear disgust	3. ragged hungry thin pale sickly dirty shaking pleading, etc.
4. Brooklyn Bridge by Day and by Night	4. Contrast of impression	4. Contrast of adjectives
5. A Street Scene	5. noise rush hurry scurry insignificance of the individual	5. Same words as characteristics

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Each topic is now taken up and with the aid of the suggestions on the blackboard, the descriptions are attempted orally by the children. In this way a number of themes can be outlined and elaborated in the oral period and the child learns that in writing the description of a place, a person, or a thing, only such characteristic details and color words are selected as will give the auditor or reader one predominant and permanent impression.

But it may be argued, "Why study these forms in the elementary school?" It is true that when children leave school they will not indulge in descriptive paragraphs nor does their correspondence require an intimate knowledge of the technical structure of narration or exposition. While this must undoubtedly be admitted, we cannot, however, draw the conclusion, "Therefore do not teach these." We are engaged in teaching correct expression; and these forms are the media. Even though letter writing does constitute the sum total of the written composition in the later life of most people, a letter which rises above the level of personal twaddle and gossip shows touches of description, of narration, of exposition and of argumentation. And, finally, we must remember that these composition exercises have their value and application in the literature lessons. When in the course of future reading, the child sees a passage that interests him, he can analyze it and criticize it in terms of his standard. His eyes are open, for instance, to the masterful picture of *Ichabod Crane,* to Irving's happy choice of characteristic details and rich picture

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words. These exercises, properly presented and stressed, teach the child the technique of expression and give drill until correct forms become habit in both oral and written speech.

The Final Reading of the Model.—The topic under discussion is the consideration of a method of teaching the model. The mode of procedure follows a number of steps: (1) the reading of the model by the teacher, (2) the outline of the model for the study of its sequence, (3) a study of unfamiliar but necessary wording and phraseology, (4) a study of the basic principles for which the model is chosen. The final step in the study of the model requires that we have a final reading of it, either by the teacher or by one of the best readers among the pupils. The reasons for this last reading are many and obvious. In the course of the analytical and detailed study, the model was well dissected. It is now necessary to give a unified impression. The final reading leads not only to this end but to an increased familiarization. In addition one always experiences a keen pleasure from an increased appreciation of old knowledge. It is in this final reading that the child sees how much the lesson has meant to him, how much more he now reads into it, and consequently how much more he reads out of it.

How Closely Shall the Model Be Followed?—Having presented the model systematically and thoroughly, the teacher must next concern herself with the problem of how closely to follow it in the course of conscious imitation. A moment's thought will show the

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futility of the positive answers found in so many manuals on composition. Any degree of imitation is justifiable, depending upon governing circumstances. These are (1) the ability of the children, (2) the previous study and use of models, (3) the nature of the topic. It follows, therefore, that the imitation will vary from exact transcription, to writing on the same topic, to writing on a kindred topic, to studying the model after the original is written by the child. Imitation, therefore, varies from the appropriation of the exact words and phrases to a mere reproduction of form and spirit. The degree of imitation hence gradually grows less as the child progresses through the grades. But even in the upper classes different privileges and varied treatment must be accorded to the children on the basis of ability. If we follow some group system of teaching composition, then children in the proficient group are required to apply the lessons learned from the model, in original topics, while those in the second division who are mediocre or deficient, follow the model closely, write on the same topic and try to reproduce the organization and even in parts the very phraseology itself.

Should the Model Precede or Follow the Composition? —A source of endless contention among writers on composition is the time when the model is to be studied —before or after the composition is written by the children. The debates are spirited and enthusiastic, each side claiming the glory of victory. The verdict, however, cannot be given to either side, for both are

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correct, each, of course, in its own circumstances. What are the merits in the dispute?

Those teachers who argue, "before," that the model must precede the child's written composition, insist that language is learned through imitation. If the model is not given the child before the written composition, he has nothing to imitate. When a new topic is presented or a new form of composition is assigned, the child feels lost. All expression is paralyzed in the face of the technical difficulties. Let the child learn the mode of procedure, the organization, and the attack, from the model, and the feeling of confidence which ensues, guarantees free and easy expression, for the child, unhampered by formal problems, expresses his mind freely.

Those who champion the opposite side of the controversy are much perturbed by such a contention, for they argue that to present the model first kills all originality and deadens every spark of personal interest. The child is too immature to see the literary value and beauty of the model. Let the child, therefore, write his own composition, replete with crudities and flagrant errors. Then let him study the model, compare it with his own product and see its inferiority in the contrast. Thus there will be aroused in each child a feeling of discontent with his limitations and he will be spurred on to greater effort. But may it not entirely dishearten the child when he perceives his own inferiority?

These contestants do not realize that there are two uses of a model, viz., a standard for imitation and a

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standard for correction. In discharging the first function, the model must naturally be used before the composition, but for purposes of correction, it follows the child's own production. Realizing the limitations of any arbitrary law, it may nevertheless be stated as a safe tendency that through the sixth year all models should precede children's compositions, for the pupils are still too poor in language possession to launch out for themselves. In the seventh and eighth years the model should be used as a standard for imitation in new and difficult forms, i. e., in descriptions, in argumentations, and the like. But, when the topic is of an old form, a narration, or a business letter, or a biography, the children should write their own compositions first and then use the model as a standard for correction. The model is studied very carefully and then the original compositions are corrected in the light of the lessons learned and the limitations noted.

How to Prevent Slavish Imitation of the Model.—The final topic in the discussion of the model is the means of guarding against overimitation, which makes composition little more than a transcription exercise and kills whatever originality and enthusiasm the child may have in his self-expression. The suggestions that are offered for guarding against slavish imitation are simple indeed, though often neglected in the routine of teaching.

1. *Variety of Organization.*—The simplest method of introducing a personal note in the compositions written after the model is studied, is to evolve with

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the children all the possible forms of organizing the facts of the subject. At the end of such an exercise each child decides for himself, the number of paragraphs he will have, the theme of each, and the grouping of facts under them. It is evident also that each mode of organization will have its appropriate opening and closing sentence. In discussing the element of originality in the outline, instances were quoted from children's work illustrating the point under discussion.

2. *Drill on Synonymous Expressions.*—In the study of the model entitled "Gellert" it was shown how rich and varied an exercise can be worked out by eliciting synonymous expressions for "valiant in the chase." Such a drill entails a verbal stock-taking which leaves the child with a more varied and richer vocabulary. In the "Pied Piper of Hamelin," we find among others, the expressions, "The town was infested with rats," "The people were beside themselves," "His clothes were variegated," and "gray rats, brown rats, young rats, old rats." These were made basic in a drill on variety of synonymous expressions with a fifth-year class. The children gave, "The town was rat-ridden," "It was a town of rats," "The rats of the universe seemed to collect there," "The rats made the town their home," "It seemed as if no rat was happy unless it got there," etc., for the first. "The people hardly knew what to do," "The people were driven to desperation," "The problem seemed hopeless to the townsfolk," "The townspeople despaired of ever getting rid of the rats," are

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types of equivalents that were elicited for the second. Such a drill is therefore an effective means of guarding against too close an imitation of the model.

The Variation Method.—A special method known as the "variation method" is gaining much popularity in many schools. Teachers who follow this method select a story which is read to the class. The story is then outlined and subdivided into logical parts. The first logical subdivision is treated somewhat as follows. The first sentence is written on the blackboard. Subject, predicate, complement and important modifiers are marked off by vertical lines. Each part of the sentence is then subjected to variations and each contribution that is accepted is put on the board in its proper column. The writer observed such a lesson in which the sentence for the day was, "The old scholar arose early each day to study the holy law." For the subject, "the old scholar," the children offered: "the old prophet," "the prophet of old," "the pious old man," "the God-fearing rabbi," "the religious teacher," "the old religious student." For the predicate verb, the teacher elicited, "awoke," "bestirred himself," "left his bed." For the adverbial modifier, "early each day," the children offered, "at the dawn of day," "at the first sign of day," "at the coming of daylight," "before the sun showed his face," "before the darkness of night had left," "when the world was still wrapped in the darkness of the night." Toward the end of the period, the blackboard work took on an appearance like the following, each contribution being in different colored chalk:

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The old scholar	*arose*	*early each day*	*to study the holy law.*
The old prophet	bestirred himself	at the dawn of day	to learn God's word.
The prophet of old	left his bed	at the first sign of day	to study the holy books.
The pious old man	awoke	at the coming of daylight	to read the commandments of the Lord.
The God-fearing rabbi		before the sun showed his face	
The religious teacher		before the darkness of the night left	
The old religious student		while the world was still wrapped in the darkness of night	

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Three twenty to thirty minute lessons were devoted to this work every week in this class. At the end of each lesson, each child selected the sentence that appealed most to him. Thus, one child selected, "The pious old man bestirred himself at the coming of daylight to learn the Holy Book," as his synthetic product, while another thought, "The old prophet arose at the first sign of day to study the holy law," the best combination. The sentence selected was copied into a notebook. Each lesson, therefore, enriched the story by a sentence which each child selected for himself. When the whole story was thus gone over, each child had the same story told in a different way.

The worth of such a procedure is unquestionable. It enriches the vocabulary, giving it greater flexibility and breadth; it teaches variety of sentence structure; it maintains active interest through friendly and helpful rivalry; and exercises to a large degree, the self-activity of the child. As a device in composition, it is of rare worth. But as a method to supplant all other ways of teaching composition, it must be condemned. Composition teaching means training in logical organization, in sustained thinking, in accurate and intelligent observation, in spontaneous expression. These ends are obviously and necessarily lost sight of in the variation method.

3. *Vary the Topic.*—In selecting the topic for composition the teacher should usually take, not one identical with that of the model, but rather one that al-

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lows general imitation only. Care must be exercised not to select a topic so similar that all a pupil need do is to change the name from "A Fireman" to "A Policeman"; from "A Sailor" to "A Soldier." If the model studied gave a description of a mounted policeman, the topic for composition should call for the description of a beggar, a peddler, a foreigner; in a word, a topic in which the principles learned in the model will be applied, but the point of view, the phraseology, and the specific organization will allow for welcome variety.

Actual experience convinces the teacher of the deadening effect of choosing too similar a topic. In a 4A class, the model studied was "Little Marie of Lehon." The model that was presented for the literary inspiration of the children ran as follows:

There she was, trotting toward us in her round cap, blue woolen gown, white apron, and wooden shoes.

On her head was a loaf of buckwheat as big as a small wheel. In one hand she held a basket full of green stuff, while the other led an old goat which seemed in no hurry to go home.

She was a rosy bright-eyed child. She looked rather shy and always seemed in haste.

After an analytical study of this lifeless and insipid model the children were told to write a similar description of a personal friend. A typical result of such an assignment is quoted so that the reader may make the comparison and draw the obvious moral.

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MY FRIEND JENNIE

There was my friend Jennie. She was jumping a rope. In one hand she carried a loaf of bread and in the other she carried a pitcher of milk. She used to be a rosy child but she is pale now.

4. *Every Composition Should Be a Personal Composition.*—In all topics the teacher must have the children so change the items and facts of the model that there will result an intensely personal expression. An illustration of this suggestion is found in a common form of business correspondence, a letter of application for a position. But no matter who the child may be who writes it, in what class it is written, or what position is applied for, it is always the same, stupid, stiff and stilted meaningless formality,—"Having seen your advertisement in this morning's . . . I herewith beg leave to offer myself as an applicant for the position." There is no justification for such formality, for few letters are more personal and urgent than an application.

If one were to try to convince an employer to let him have a particular position what would be his line of argument? First, he would analyze the position and make a list of the necessary qualifications that one must possess to fulfill the requirements. Second, he would proceed to prove that because of special training and experience, he possessed these qualifications in so strong a measure that the employer could not, in justice to his business interest, refuse the applicant. This, at any rate, seems to be the course

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dictated by the urgency of the situation. Why should we teach a set form and inflict it upon our children, with all its meaningless words, when it is precisely the kind of application that would never make a favorable impression?

Let us assume that a boy is writing a letter applying for a position as errand boy; what should he include in his letter? What are the demands of the position? One must (a) know the city, (b) be quick and alive, (c) be honest and reliable. In the light of these requirements a boy should say (a) that he was born in the city, hence the inference is that he knows the city streets and highways; (b) that he sold newspapers for two years and is therefore alive and alert; (c) that he served as cash boy in a department store on Saturdays and during the holiday season and can bring references, thus showing that he is honest and trustworthy. These essentials are precisely the very items that children who follow the set model always fail to mention.

Another illustration will suffice. The position applied for by a class of sixth-year boys was that of "wagon boy" for John Wanamaker. They all informed the gentleman that they noted his advertisement in the morning newspaper, that they begged leave to offer themselves as applicants, that they had completed the sixth year of the public school, that they lived with their parents, that they could bring references from principals or teachers. But the employer is not interested in all these estimable things. They are all beside the mark. To qualify for the position

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one must know the streets and avenues of the city; be able to understand more than the English language, because so many foreigners purchase at the store; know how to care for a horse; be alert and active, and honest. Let the children list these requisites. What can they offer? "Born in New York City" is certainly an asset. "I can speak or understand German as well as English," is worth adding. "I helped on a milk route," is another qualification that has a direct bearing on the position. In the class referred to almost every lad spoke one other language besides English, but the fact was not mentioned; ten lads could drive, but not one said so. Every bit of personal appeal was lost in the dead formalism of the model.

5. *Teach Through Many Models.*—In teaching any principle of composition in grades above the sixth year more than one model may be used; two or three may be presented and the principle of composition evolved from them. The point is taught, but the variety of the appeal guarantees a rational rather than a slavish imitation.

6. *The Model after the Child's Effort.*—A final suggestion advises that just as soon as it is feasible, the model should be used as a standard for correction rather than for imitation, hence the model is to follow rather than precede the child's original composition.

SUGGESTED READING

The suggested reading for this chapter will be found at the end of Chapter VIII.

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CHAPTER VII

THE CORRECTION OF WRITTEN COMPOSITIONS

In introducing the subject of the teaching of composition in the grammar grades, it was observed that the method-whole in composition required three separate and distinct periods, each having its own aim, function and organization. These were designated (1) the period of oral drill and teaching, (2) the period of written composition, and (3) the period of correction. The three preceding chapters concerned themselves with the conduct of the first of these periods; the present chapter must give itself to the second and the third. We must pass, therefore, to a consideration of the second period.

The Period of Written Composition.—In the first period the science of composition is taught. But this aspect of the subject finds its justification in application and in rational use. The second period, therefore, concerns itself with the art side of teaching. The teacher's task of instructing and the pupils' task of learning give way to a free and personal expression by the children. This is pre-eminently their period.

The Teacher's Function.—But it must not be erroneously assumed that since the period of direct

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teaching is over, the teacher need only see that the children are amply supplied with paper and ink and started on their written work. The teacher's function, though not instructional, is nevertheless supervisory. Teachers must not conveniently eliminate themselves from this period merely because the burden of the work is necessarily thrown upon the children.

What is the teacher's work of supervision in this period? First we must mention the tireless effort that must be made to correct bad physical posture of the children during written work. Impaired eyesight, round shoulders, depressed abdominal cavities are a few of the many distressing effects due to bad posture in written work. The most essential fact to remember is that bad posture which is not persistently corrected soon becomes a habit from the clutch of which the child cannot free himself.

It is also important that the character of the work should be watched constantly. A word of praise to a child who has begun well keeps the fount of effort freely flowing; a word of warning or censure awakens the child to a realization that he must approximate a higher standard. While the children are writing, the teacher must walk about the room, up and down aisles, and inspect work, not in a spirit of espionage but rather in the attitude of friendly criticism and constructive supervision.

In this period children should feel that they are at liberty to ask questions, consult the dictionary or verify facts in any textbook to which they can have access. It is a grave error to deny to a class the very

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privileges that we ourselves take in our own written work. The child who asks the teacher whether one says, "None of them are" or "None of them is"; or whether "principal" is correct in the expression, "The principle which explains the workings of the magnet," shows promise and healthy development. He has reached a point in his linguistic growth where it actually makes a difference to him whether his form is correct or not. Most pupils are in a state of sublime indifference to the laws of language and to the unreasonable demands of our unphonetic spelling. The teacher need not answer the pupil directly. The child who wants to know the spelling of "emancipation" is asked to suggest the first two syllables. After he offers "e, man," he is told to look for the remainder of the word in the dictionary. Such questions as, "When was the Battle of —— fought," or "What was the name of the general who . . . " etc., can be answered by "Look for the name in the index of your history textbook." But where a direct and didactic answer must be given, it should be offered in the earnest spirit which prompts the child. Questions that are asked merely for the sake of asking questions must be treated in a manner designed to hastily discourage the offender.

Cautions in Written Composition. — Experience shows a few common errors in the conduct of the written composition period that need guarding, for they are frequent pitfalls for the unwary. We must, at all times, make a sharp distinction between "composition" and "penmanship." All written work must

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always show care, accuracy, neatness and earnest endeavor to produce results on the highest level that the child can attain. But the desire for good penmanship, for "a fine-looking lot of compositions," must not befog our conception of "composition" as an expressional exercise in which penmanship and technique of language must be duly subordinated. When school authorities require that the written composition be a polished result, perfect in penmanship, spelling and punctuation, it is wise to let the children write their compositions in the rough with all conscious interest on the expressional side of their tasks. This is the freest possible expression. In a later period each child rereads his composition, corrects it in ways that his calmer and more critical judgment may dictate and then commits the final effort to paper. But we must not fail to realize that this is a period of penmanship rather than composition which is given as an expedient when school regulations place undue emphasis on form rather than on content.

Children's compositions should be kept within reasonable limits. In the fifth and sixth years, they should not extend beyond one and one-quarter pages of the regular six-by-nine paper usually used in the schools; in the last two years the maximum should be about one and one-half pages. Long and discursive exercises have serious limitations. They tend to increase the number of errors, to make difficult the regular correction of composition and to produce extreme carelessness. Few children are capable of maintain-

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ing a uniformly high standard of efficiency in a long effort.

But little need be said of the teacher's supervisory rather than instructional function in this period, if composition is taught by a group system which uses the same method, and sets the same pace, for only those children who are of like ability, and which tries to raise the language level of each child by meeting personal needs and individual weaknesses. The group method would continue the instructional task of the teacher by keeping one set of pupils busy writing while the other would be receiving its oral drill and explanations.

THE PERIOD OF CORRECTION

Correction of written work in its fullest and ugliest sense is one of the banes of the teacher's life. There is so much of it that it is completely overwhelming. The results are most discouraging for the round of irritating errors appears and reappears despite the untold drudgery of constant correction. The vital problem in correction of written work is hence twofold: (1) how to reduce the onerousness of the burden, and (2) how to make the work more telling and productive of greater results. These two pressing needs must be met by a sound method.

Objects of Correction.—But before we attempt to indicate a method we must formulate definitely the reasons for correcting class work. Teachers are required to go through the tedium of correction, first, because there is the need of acquainting the child with

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his error and the cause of it so that he will be able to correct the incorrect form on his own initiative. Secondly, it is hoped that by dint of repetition teachers will inculcate in each child a habit of self-criticism so that he will examine critically all that he writes and change it in accordance with his better judgment and in the light of what his language lessons teach him.

The Time for Correction.—Much ado is often made about the question, "When shall we correct?" Any answer will suffice, for the question is more or less useless. Let the teacher warn the children against possible errors if they can be anticipated with any degree of certainty. On the other hand, the corrections may be made during the writing of the compositions, if we feel certain that this interference will not curb the expressional tendencies of the children. From the very nature of the case we can readily realize that the bulk of the corrections must be made after the compositions have been written. But at all times we must bear one important caution in mind, viz., that the corrections must never become too minute, lest children become ultra self-conscious. With their limitations constantly confronting them, they fear to write as freely, as fully and as enthusiastically as they feel about their subject and the result lacks the life and the zest that characterize good compositions.

Incorrect Method.—Before suggesting a method of correcting written work we must note, in passing, certain very common though incorrect procedures which must be avoided, for they defeat the twofold object that governs all correction. One of these is the

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method pursued by teachers who have too strong a sense of responsibility and are therefore prompted to do too much for their pupils. The compositions are taken home, read by the teachers and with the aid of pen and red ink, the children's efforts are slashed most ruthlessly and the correct forms indicated. In the next period the child receives his composition—a veritable labyrinth of red lines. For example, *king Edward* has a line under the small *k* with a capital above it and a small "c" underneath. The child looks up at a complex chart of queer symbols and learns that the "c" advises him to make a capital. The word *akward* is underlined and marked "sp." The chart tells him that he has made a mistake in spelling. If he has no dictionary, he asks the teacher for the correct form. The next sentence has a two-legged "p" with its face turned the wrong way or a large "s" which indicates where to begin a new sentence. The mystic chart tells him that he has offended by violating paragraph unity or sentence structure. A new sheet of paper is now given him and the child begins to transcribe his composition. He carries out the red ink warnings, makes the new paragraph or the sentence, writes *king* with a capital, *awkward* with two "w's" in the right places; never questions the "why" or the "wherefore" for he has full confidence in the teacher. What are the inevitable results? The next composition finds the same errors of paragraph unity and sentence structure. *Queen Elizabeth* is written *queen Elizabeth,* etc. Because the child did not learn the cause of his errors, he is as helpless as heretofore.

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He obeys slavishly the arbitrary dictates of the red ink, and does not acquire habits of self-correction. In the light of the two aims that were set up as standards, this method fails woefully despite the conscientious effort and the weary drudgery of the teacher.

The Method of Correcting Written Work.—A pedagogical method of correcting written work requires that the teacher read the compositions but refrain from putting any marks of correction on them. While the children are writing, the teacher can read their compositions over their shoulders and make note of such general errors or class mistakes as merit class study and attention. In this way a number of the compositions are read. The remaining ones are read after class hours, and the common errors noted in the teacher's book. It is imperative that the teacher refrain from marking them. The time now spent is insignificant in comparison with the old method. These typical errors are now embodied in a composition and the result is put on the board to be taken up in the period for correction. The children are made to understand that the faulty work on the board is a composite of their common errors.

Elicit the mistakes from the pupils, then through questions and suggestions lead them to see the reason that explains why the form is wrong. The first inaccurate sentence on the board is "John, with his dog, are in the room." The teacher appeals to their knowledge of grammar, and asks such questions as "What is the subject? the predicate? the rule of agreement? What are the modifiers?" If for some reason,

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answers to these cannot be obtained from the children, a direct explanation is given and the reason for the inaccuracy is stated by the teacher. The children are then called upon for the correction of the sentence. Under no circumstances should the teacher offer the correct form, for the aim of the lesson and the test of comprehension are both defeated. In this way each general error on the board is taken up, discussed, and corrected by the pupils. When this work is completed, the children read their own compositions with great care and look for such typical errors, which they underline and correct.

In this work a few minor cautions are necessary: (1) The corrections on compositions written in ink should be made with a different colored ink or lead pencil, for if the same colored ink is used, the children's minds become occupied with the problem of how to correct surreptitiously; an "e" is filled up and dotted to become an "i," a small "s" has its head enlarged to become a capital letter, and the like—practices which take attention away from the main issue, the comprehension of the cause of error and the interest in self-correction. (2) Let the children underline each error with ruler and pencil, and refrain from indicating by a confusion of symbols what literary sin they have committed. These symbols cannot anticipate every possible error that children in their ignorance can perpetrate. The period is often wasted with questions of the type, "I put in double quotation marks where I should have had single ones; how shall I mark it?" etc. A line under each error ought to

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suffice. (3) It is important that children look for only one or two typical errors at a time. To ask them to read their compositions and correct in the one reading all their errors is too big a task for them. In the resulting diffusion of attention, they overlook flagrant mistakes and neglect important corrections. (4) We must stimulate them to set to this task with spirit and avidity. They naturally fear to bring out all their errors prominently. Hence we must put a premium on correction. Let them feel that all errors corrected are excused; all uncorrected, count doubly against them. In this way we reduce the teacher's burden, lead the children to see their errors and note the cause, and to develop habits of self-criticism.

Seeming Limitations of the Method.—But it may be argued that there are serious limitations to this method. To begin with, not all errors will be corrected. This imputation is true, but it is better to have some of the errors corrected and feel that an effective effort has been made to undermine them than to correct them all only to be chagrined by their unwelcome reappearance in the next composition period. A second criticism that can in all justice be urged is that in such a method all typical errors will be eliminated and perhaps eradicated, but how will those errors that are peculiar and personal to each child be brought out and corrected? To reach the child's personal limitations and incorrect forms, this method must be supplemented in a number of ways. Let us consider them.

Eliminating Individual Errors: 1. *Each Composition to be Read by a Critic.*—The first means that we

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have of undermining those peculiar errors that are made by each child is to arrange to have each composition read by a critic. We have all seen evidences of the children's desire to read one another's compositions. Exchanges are constantly going on behind the teacher's back if such a practice is foolishly forbidden. Such a desire can be utilized for educational ends. Just as soon as the teacher knows her pupils she can group them by two's and have each child act as an assigned critic of his classmate. Thus, a child who writes good compositions is made the critic of one whose work is below grade. The former can receive little constructive criticism from any of his classmates; the latter can gather a great deal of helpful advice from the assigned critic. The teacher must direct the critics' efforts along certain lines by hanging a large cardboard in some conspicuous place, containing these directions:

CRITICS LOOK FOR:

1. Paragraph Unity and Structure.
2. Sentences—
   - (a) Capitalization.
   - (b) Subject and Predicate.
   - (c) "and" habit.
3. Punctuation, Spelling, Capitalization.

Each critic reads the composition three times, each time for one specific error. To add to the seriousness and the dignity of the task, each critic must sign

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his name and pin his criticisms to the original composition. In marking compositions, the teacher should rate the critic as well as the writer of the composition. The compositions are then returned and each child reads the critic's suggestions, carrying out such directions as appeal to him, and verifying the doubtful ones by reference to textbook or to the teacher. Where class discipline is properly organized, children are allowed to sit together, to discuss their compositions, and decide on the final corrections. However, those whose ideas of discipline call for deathlike stillness, with a repressive silence and military responses, may shrink from such a suggestion. In this form of correction, children take pride in offering good corrections and in bringing compositions to their critics that have as few mistakes as possible; they are at all times kept active learning the art of self-criticism.

2. *Compositions Criticized by the Class.*—A second supplementary device to detect personal errors and shortcomings is the common exercise of having the class criticize the compositions of individuals. To elicit criticism that is direct and pointed, the children should be trained to listen intelligently by having a chart similar to the one mentioned before in front of the class, and requiring "Group I" to listen for paragraph unity and sentence structure, "Group II" for grammatical correctness, and "Group III" for beginnings, endings, kind of facts, etc. In this way much of the stupid criticism that is often made by children can be eliminated. The class should be encouraged to point out commendable efforts so that the child who

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reads his composition does not feel that he is running the gantlet of adverse criticism. It is also advisable to allow a child to answer his critics and to defend his stand if he is not willing to accept the criticisms that are too freely offered by the thoughtless.

3. *Personal Correction and Criticism by the Teacher.*—A third supplementary aid to help each child overcome his own personal peculiarities is to have the teacher give his personal attention to each composition. The task is not only colossal, but when carried out in the usual manner is, as we have seen, devoid of results. Hence the teacher should take only one-third or one-fourth of the whole set of compositions each week, the following week the second third or the second quarter, etc., until every member of the class has received the benefit of the teacher's criticism. But it must be remembered that each composition must be read with the child, the error pointed out, and its cause explained, but the pupil himself must indicate the correct form. No mark is made on the composition that the child does not personally dictate. One-third or one-fourth of a large class would rarely give a teacher more than twelve or fourteen compositions a week. The children can meet the teacher in personal conference before school hours, during study periods, or for a few moments after sessions. In this way the teacher is not overwhelmed by a task that saps energy and vitality, the children learn the cause of their errors, habits of self-correction are engendered, and positive and effective steps are taken to improve standards of expression.

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How Shall the Class Work Be Kept?—When the work is completed, how shall it be kept? Surely not in the altogether too prevalent form in which papers of the whole class are collected, fastened tight, adorned with ribbons and elaborate title pages, and hidden in the dark recesses of a closet to await the critical eye of principal or superintendent. These compositions must be kept in individual envelopes or in notebooks so that each child has a cumulative result. At a moment's notice the teacher must be able to see a child's progress or retrogression. The children like this method better, for the pride of ownership and evidences of tasks accomplished are always sources of keen pleasure.

The Rewriting of Corrected Compositions.—The final consideration in the matter of correcting compositions is the problem of rewriting compositions. Not many years ago, the unanimous verdict was, "All compositions must be rewritten." To-day the camp is divided. Many insist that compositions should never be rewritten. Their many arguments, when summed up, reduce themselves to the following: (1) Time is lavishly spent in an exercise that is a matter of penmanship rather than of composition. (2) The period is dull since it is at best a stupid repetition, a mechanical transcription. (3) Such lessons have a deadening effect upon future compositions since no joy is experienced in this kind of expression.

The opponents insist on rewriting, for they argue that in real life the first draft is generally not the final one. We rewrite as a result of self-criticism of

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the first effort. Second, the habit to polish, to modify, and to correct an initial effort is well worth acquiring. Third, the final rewritten form leaves a good impression upon the child's mind.

Each side has legitimate claims and a pedagogical basis but nevertheless suffers from the excesses of an extreme point of view. A moderate policy counsels that compositions should never be rewritten for the sake of improved penmanship nor at regular periods, like once a fortnight or once a week. All rewriting should spring from a desire on the part of the children to have an opportunity to improve an unsuccessful first attempt. For purposes of illustration we may assume that a composition was written and the model was studied afterward for comparison and correction. The children now realize how far from the mark they hit, how much better they could do if a second trial were allowed them. If this is the feeling that prevails, the children should be permitted to rewrite their unsuccessful compositions. This second exercise is alive and spirited, for it is actuated by strong motive power and earnest conviction.

SUGGESTED READING

The suggested reading for this chapter will be found at the end of Chapter VIII.

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CHAPTER VIII

HOW TO VITALIZE COMPOSITION EXERCISES

Introduction.—The concluding chapter on the teaching of composition asks how life and enthusiasm can be introduced into the varied expressional lessons of the elementary school, because children generally feel that these are routine drills, devoid of all interest and giving no pleasure. They experience little exhilaration but much fatiguing effort because teachers neglect the basic tenet that was laid down at the beginning of this discussion, viz., "The play spirit must characterize the art of composition, for all art was conceived in a play spirit." We must now turn to a series of miscellaneous suggestions that seek to vitalize composition and infuse into it this play spirit of art.

1. **Greater Emphasis on Letters.**—Compositions in essay form usually lack the naturalness of letters; they are as stiff and stilted as our own high-school and college essays used to be. The reason, in the main, seems to be that the child sees no use for the composition form just as we saw no use and felt no need for the essays imposed upon us. But a letter stands out as a form of communication that is essentially useful, practical, and personal; these attributes give it spirit and

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interest. An examination of the term's work in elementary classes reveals a surprising preponderance of the essay form. It is evident that the usual ratio of three essays to one letter each school month must be changed to at least two letters and two essays.

2. **The Correspondence Should Treat of Actual Affairs of Real Life.**—If letter forms are to be emphasized, we must eliminate at once such letters as are letters in form only and essays in spirit. One may write to a cousin, as is so often done in the classroom, about "How people live in China," or "How the Battle of Bunker Hill was fought," and use the proper form, arrangement, superscription, salutation, etc., but he is, nevertheless, sending an essay, not a letter. A recent publication much used by teachers suggests the following "Subjects for Letters": "Imagine you live in Honolulu; write to a brother telling of the people, their life, occupations, etc." "Write to your uncle on what you think of a book." "You just returned from a visit to your cousin in New Orleans; write him about the return trip." "Write a letter describing your imaginary visit to the South." "Write a letter telling how you spent your last vacation." "Write a letter telling your aims in life." These are a few of numerous suggestions, all violating our cardinal dictum which holds that a letter is a personal expression on a personal theme rather than a general expression or an artificial literary effusion.

Select titles like the following: "Letter complaining that inferior goods were sent by a department store, and the answer"; "Letter of application, and the an-

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swers: (a) acceptance, (b) rejection"; "Letter of apology for a business error"; "Letter of introduction"; "Letter asking for an advertisement for the school paper"; "Letter challenging another class to a contest"; "Letter to a hotel asking for summer rates"; "Letter to a summer camp asking for terms"; "Letter to the Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals asking that the authorities send for a homeless cat"; "Letter to the Board of Health complaining of some source of contagion," etc. In all cases the child should be required to write the answers also. Because these relations and affairs necessitate correspondence in actual life, they must be the topics for the letters in the schoolroom.

3. **The Correspondence Itself Should Be Real.**—Not only should the theme of the letters reflect real life and human relations, but the form of the correspondence should be made as actual as possible. In the workaday world one writes because he is actuated by two conditions: (1) He has something to say, and (2) he has someone to whom to say it. In school, children usually write because they must say something; what they say is stored in the teacher's desk in neat packages. It is evident that classroom correspondence must be actualized by having it addressed to a real person who will read and answer it. The letter asking for an advertisement in the school paper should be addressed to one's permanent critic, who reads it and answers it. The exchange of letters actually takes place. This means life and spirit, for the letter is real, it bears a living message, and brings the coveted answer. Every

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opportunity should be seized upon to make classroom correspondence real and urgent. Children should write letters to their teachers when they have a complaint to register or when they seek advice. If a member of the class is sick, or is at home because he has lost a member of his family, notes of sympathy should be written and the best ones sent. If teachers keep watching for such opportunities, they will find innumerable ones arising in the course of ordinary routine during the term.

4. **The Class Journal with Its Board of Editors Elected or Selected.**—A class journal can be organized in the sixth, seventh, and eighth years. A board of editors of three or five is appointed by the teacher or elected by the children. This board is directed by the teacher and brings out an issue at regular intervals of about a fortnight. The journal is of simple construction and can be mimeographed so that each member of the class receives his personal copy. The editors read each week's compositions and select the best three or four for reproduction in the class journal. They post notices on the class bulletin boards calling for original stories, anecdotes, timely clippings, appropriate personals, and the like. They write up interesting classroom incidents, summarize school athletics, give the news of the class teams, hold contests for the best short story—in a word, contribute to the life and spirit of the class.

Such a journal can be made an agent of untold value. There are a number of pupils in each class who like to read, who do read, whose imagination is rich

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with interesting inventions but who have no motive and no reason for giving expression to these through writing. The journal draws them out and produces surprises for the teacher. It is also a means of revealing the true natures of some children to their teachers. Because a child is not proficient in the work of the grade, he is judged stupid. But his contributions to the class journal may reveal a sense of humor, an originality, a fund of common-sense, and practical judgment which will stand him in good stead in later years. These revelations offer most agreeable surprises. Such a journal will also make for greater class solidarity; it creates good class spirit, acts as a wholesome spur toward better compositions, for children strive to be selected for the editorial board and to have their compositions reprinted in the issues of the paper.

5. **Use Debatable Topics.**—Debatable topics should be used with greater frequency, for they meet with much favor among the children. They are popular because—if well chosen—they give the child an opportunity to express his personal preference. Hence we must be sure to select a topic that reflects the child's life and desires, his point of view, his yearnings. The following list of topics urged in a standard book much used in elementary grades cannot receive unqualified indorsement: "Physical Training Should Be Compulsory in Public Schools," "Woman Suffrage," "The Civil-Service System Should Be Abolished," "The Term of the Supreme Court Judge Should Be Limited," "Canada Should Be Annexed to the United

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States." A more appropriate series of topics would be: "Resolved, That We Have a School Paper"; "Resolved, That We Have a School City"; "Resolved, That the Girls Should Vote in the School City"; "Resolved, That Examinations Be Abolished"; "Resolved, That John Brown Was Not Justified in His Actions"; "Resolved, That the Fireman Is More Useful than the Policeman, or the Nurse than the Teacher," etc.

The children should be allowed to take sides; an advocate of the negative should be declared a partner of a sponsor for the affirmative, and should be required to exchange his composition with him. The succeeding composition lesson should continue the same subject so that each child has an opportunity to answer his opponent. The results, when the topic is appropriately chosen, are most satisfactory because the two governing motives which prompt natural expression are present, viz., the children have something to say and they are addressing their views to some definite person who will read them. Enthusiasm and pleasure are guaranteed to the children in such work.

6. Aim at Variety of Form and Content.—An examination of a term's compositions usually reveals one marked limitation—there is woeful lack of variety of form and content in them. If one were to check up the titles of these compositions, he would find that biographies lead by a large margin. When in doubt as to a subject, a teacher usually selects a character about whom the children have read in history or literature and tries to make him yield the inspiration for the week's composition. These biographies are simple

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to write, for these persons were all born, lived their eventful lives, and then died, thus affording an obvious sequence and a stereotyped organization. There is no reason why we should lack variety of subject-matter if we consider the many possibilities that are at hand.

The outline here given suggests types of compositions appropriate for the range of grades in the elementary school:

I. *Narration*—

1. Reproduction of
   a. Story Read or Told
   b. Incident Witnessed
2. Imaginative Incident
   a. Personal Anecdote, Humorous
   b. Serious Story, Result of Child's Imagination

The following compositions are types of imaginative incidents taken from the work of school children. They are quoted not because of unusual merit but rather because they are typical of the humor and the tragedy that most children feel and can express.

The Expected Guest

On Monday afternoon my uncle from Boston was expected to pay us a visit. I had never seen him, because he had not visited us for fifteen years. We occupied a flat in the house situated in the upper part of Manhattan, and mother and I were alone.

At about two o'clock the bell rang and I answered the

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door. A man entered and inquired if Mrs. Green was at home. I replied, very politely, "Yes, sir; walk right into the parlor and sit down. Mother will be in in a minute."

Then going to the kitchen where my mother was, I said to her, "Mother, uncle is in the parlor." So she slipped off her apron and went in. As she came near the door the man arose and said, "Madam, I would like you to try a new brand of coffee which I am advertising, and if you like I will leave a sample with you and call to-morrow for your order." My mother did not feel like ordering coffee that day because she was sadly disappointed. But we had a good laugh, and about nine o'clock that evening my uncle arrived.

A Daring Rescue

On the evening of November 22nd I was seated in my father's store writing a composition, when I was disturbed by a great hullabaloo outside. Whenever I am occupied in this way the least disturbance irritates me. So, throwing aside my work, I ran to the door to find out the cause of the disturbance.

I was horror stricken at the sight which met my gaze. The whole street was lighted up with a red glow. Glancing up at a house nearby, I saw flames belching forth from a first-story window. A great crowd of furious people had been attracted to the spot and the street was crowded. Some daring boys had climbed up the fire-escape and one of them had muffled a blanket around his face and had gone into the burning flat. He immediately withdrew and in his hand he clutched a chair. He was just giving it a final tug when he was overcome by the pungent smoke. He hurled the chair back and ran down into the street, closely followed by the other boys.

The sea of expectant faces was suddenly turned upward. For on the top floor, the figure of a girl was seen standing on the window-sill ready to jump. The flames could never have reached that height, but the girl had probably been

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crazed by fear, and had acted upon the impulse of the moment. "Would nobody stop her?" I kept repeating to myself. To jump would be fatal. One of the men in the crowd had courage enough to climb swiftly up the fire-escapes. He reached her just in the nick of time. Bidding her be brave, he gripped her around the waist and cautiously climbed along the narrow ledge to the opposite window, where the fire-escape was situated. Their forms were plainly silhouetted against the white wall of the building. Every neck in the crowd was craned upward. The girl had now collapsed and the burden was entirely upon the man. He descended slowly, oh, so slowly, until he reached the first floor where the flames were snarling, hissing, and crackling from the window. He paused a moment! Would he falter after having gone so far? Gathering all his remaining strength in one last effort, he made a desperate spurt into the very heart of the flames, and just when his strength was deserting him a fireman snatched the girl from his now feeble arms and lowered her down to a waiting comrade below. For meanwhile the firemen had arrived. The girl and her rescuer were badly scorched and they were both carried to a neighboring drug store.

At this stage the fire was at its height. The flames had burst through the ceiling into the flat above. The owner of the burning flat, who occupied a store directly below it, was crying piteously, for, said he, "My wife and baby are above." With difficulty he was assured that they were safe. Meanwhile the firemen were exerting every effort and soon had the fire under control.

Not a pin was saved from the ruins after the fire. But what is of more importance no lives were lost. The following day the papers had a thrilling account of how "A driver at the risk of his life saves a girl of eighteen."

II. *Description.*—A descriptive composition may vary considerably so that the child never realizes that

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he is writing the same literary form, for it may be a description of a place, of a person, or of a thing. But in all description we should bear in mind the fact that the child is not interested in writing a description merely for the sake of description, merely to give to someone a rich, detailed picture which he himself sees. Every description that is written in the elementary school should have either a personal touch or a story element in it; it must always be a description for some definite purpose; to give the setting of a story, a picture of the main character in an incident, or the like. A child's language stock is too poor to enable him to indulge in description freely, and to give a vivid impression of characteristic details merely through the use of rich color words and suggestive phrases. In describing a person the child must be made to realize that he can give us a picture of the person by telling what the character does and says as well as by giving an enumeration of the distinguishing features. What is meant by having children write description with a personal touch or a story element, can perhaps best be seen from an analysis of concrete illustrations.

Illustration A. A boy is about to start out from a country town to try his fortune in the city. Describe him.

Illustration B. "Der kleine Johannes"—Description of a lake. Its beauty and splendor tempt Johannes to row in the boat, in violation of his mother's commands.

Illustration C. My Classmate.

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My Classmate

On coming into the classroom every morning it is a habit of mine to glance at a certain individual whose antics are quite amusing. There are very few characters in our class whose descriptions would be as interesting as that of my hero's.

He is as tall as the average fifteen-year-old boy. Perhaps not many peculiarities as to traits can be seen unless he is closely watched. He has a kindly disposition and is at peace with all. The mention of black hair, dark brown eyes, prominent nose and rather thin features will suffice for a description of his appearance. One of his chief characteristics is modesty. Of course he knows grammar, but when he gets up to recite he misses because being so modest he is satisfied that somebody else should get the glory. Many times in the different rooms of the departmental section, he can be seen gazing out of the window, watching the clouds as they sail gracefully by. I remember distinctly on one occasion, while he was in one of his favorite reveries, I arose to read a composition about a diamond necklace valued at $10,000. At the mention of such an enormous sum of money his eyes grew as large as saucers, his mouth expanded to twice its natural size, and his face was aglow with excitement. So noticeable was this that the teacher on seeing it remarked, "Master X has really awakened."

I might relate some more very interesting incidents regarding him but I am afraid my narrative may become tedious. Hoping the one of whom I write will not in any way be offended, as I have tried hard to say nothing that would embarrass him, I will close feeling certain that my description has not been in vain.

Pupil in 8A Grade.

Illustration D. The Beggar. Turgenieff: "Dream Tales."

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THE BEGGAR

I was walking along the street. . . . I was stopped by a decrepit old beggar.

Bloodshot, tearful eyes, blue lips, coarse rags, festering wounds. . . . Oh, how hideously poverty had eaten into this miserable creature!

He held out to me a red, swollen, filthy hand. He groaned, he mumbled of help.

I began feeling in all my pockets. . . . No purse, no watch, not even a handkerchief. . . . I had taken nothing with me. And the beggar was still waiting. . . . And his outstretched hand feebly shook and trembled.

Confused, abashed, I warmly clasped the filthy, shaking hand. . . . "Don't be angry, brother; I have nothing, brother."

The beggar stared at me with his bloodshot eyes. His blue lips smiled; and he in his turn gripped my chilly fingers.

"What of it, brother?" he mumbled; "thanks for this too. That is a gift too, brother."

I knew that I too had received a gift from my brother.

III. *Exposition.*—The next form that composition may take is the expository one. But here, too, it must be remembered that in the question of form *vs.* content, form always proves—to the child—to be less interesting. The teacher must make sure of a fitting content, hence children should not be required to write expository compositions merely for the sake of learning the technical requisites of literary exposition. There must be a personal element, and an individual expression throughout the essay. From this point of view, models like the following are poor, for

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in the final analysis they have no reason for being and are expository merely for the sake of expounding.

How to Play Ping-Pong

Ping-pong is a game played by men, women and children. A light, hollow ball, a pair of rackets, a net and a table are needed. Boys often use small boards and a cloth stretched across a table, but grown-up people use regulation tables and rackets.

The game is like tennis. Since it is played on a table, it is often called table-tennis. The first player serves the ball. If he fails to "place" it properly, the count is against him. Should he "place" the ball within the correct space, the second player must hit it with his racket. The object is to keep hitting it and sending it within the proper lines. The player who has the highest count wins. The system of points is the same as that used in tennis.

How a Canal Lock Works

A person who has never traveled on a canal is always interested in the operation of the locks. A lock is a structure in a canal that is designed to raise boats from a low level to a higher one or vice versa. Since the land through which a canal flows is not absolutely level, it becomes necessary to raise or lower a boat with the changing height of the water.

The lock has two strong gates across the canal. These separate the two levels of water. When a boat comes to the lock from the low level, the gate is opened and it is allowed to enter. The gate is then shut and the boat is inclosed between the two gates. The second gate is then opened, and the water from the higher level gradually runs in. The boat is raised slowly. When the gate is opened wide, the water in the lock is the same height as the higher level in

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the canal. The boat is then pulled out of the lock and proceeds on its way.

Teachers' manuals on the teaching of composition are replete with expositions of this type, excerpts that give a list of impersonal directions, written, as far as the child is concerned, for no other purpose than to illustrate technicalities of formal language. No worth-while effort by the child can find its impulse in the indifference which such models arouse.

How can one add the personal touch and introduce motive in the exposition written by school pupils? An analysis of the following essay written by a 7A boy may give the answer:

His First Swimming Lesson

My last summer was not the happiest one of my life for not many weeks had passed before I broke my leg in a bad fall down the stairs. It was difficult indeed for me to get about with my clumsy crutches and my foot in plaster. The day was hot and I felt that I would enjoy the cool breezes of the East River. I therefore hobbled over on my crutches to the dock which is only three blocks from my house.

I had not been there very long when one of the boys who was carelessly jumping from one canal boat to another and from one raft to another, slipped and fell in. By the terrible struggle to grasp the raft I saw he could not swim. Had I been well I could have saved him. But with my bandaged leg I could do nothing. I rushed to the end of the pier as well as I could. By this time the lad luckily grasped a loose board. As he held on I shouted my directions to him.

I told him to fill his lungs with a deep breath and hold his head above water. As soon as he did this I advised him

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to kick with his legs and push the board in the direction of the raft. He tried it but was too excited to do it right. I then told him to push the board under his arms to be sure of support. He did it. I then began the arm movement, hands together, all the way out, palms turned out and each arm pushing through the water in a semicircle until the palms touch, then push hands out again. He did as he saw me do and covered a short distance. I then shouted to him to keep his legs working. Just then a swell of a passing boat pushed him with some force and he reached the raft.

It was an exciting day but even if I did not save the careless boy, I gave him his first lesson in swimming.

The feeling one gets on reading this child's effort is that the exposition of the swimming strokes is not forced; it is not written because he was trying to carry out the set formula for this special form of composition. Its setting is natural, its context is real, its explanations are spontaneous, and its very expression intensely personal. The following list of topics may give added illustrations of how to introduce a personal note in exposition in order to produce more spirited and lifelike results:

"The Boy on the Coaching Line Advising the Players."

"The Captain of the Basket-ball Team Explaining the Signals to His Players."

"The Captain of the Baseball Team Giving His Players Instruction in 'Stealing Bases.'"

"How I Won the Championship in the Ping-Pong Tournament."

"How I Made My Record in Tennis."

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"How I Made a Tabouret that Won My Teacher's Praise."

"Why the Apron I Sewed Was Not a Success," etc.

IV. *Argumentation.*—In a previous connection, necessary cautions, suggestions, and a list of appropriate topics for argumentation were given. Nothing need be added here for elementary composition.

V. *Invention.*—This is a form of composition that finds the children most responsive, for it appeals to their sense of originality; it calls for all their ingenuity and for a full and free expression of those ideas that crave most for utterance. It is obvious that the forms of inventive composition can be as varied as the teachers who guide the lessons and the children who write the final product. The forms most frequently used are:

A. Imaginary Conversations.—The success of these compositions is determined primarily by the appropriateness of the topics selected. The following situations have brought uniformly good results:

1. The Little Girl Pleading with Lincoln for Her Brother's Life.

One cold, damp Sunday morning in the spring of 1863 a little girl was seen ascending the steps of the White House. She rushed past the guard at the main entrance and before she could be overtaken was in the large office of President Lincoln. The president, surprised, looked up with a start and then asked:

"What can I do for you, my dear girl?"

"I have come to ask for a great favor."

"To plead for your rebel father, I suppose."

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"No, sir, for my brother, John."

"A rebel who should be freed for shooting his northern countrymen, I suppose."

"No, sir, he is a loyal supporter of his country's flag."

"Then why come here to plead for him?"

"Because, sir, he fell asleep while on sentinel duty. For eighteen hours he fought bravely with his regiment and helped win the battle. When the fighting was over, he was put in the first batch of sentinels. He is not strong, he is young, only eighteen. He trotted up and down and, before he knew it, he was asleep at his post. He was caught and is sentenced to be shot."

"His offense is a grave one indeed," said the President, "but so brave a boy and the brother of such a sister can be of greater service above ground than under it. Go home, you have saved your brother."

In her great joy the little girl rushed from the office without stopping to thank President Lincoln.

B....A.... 6B.

2. An Encounter with a Beggar.—The writer of the composition meets the beggar, who solicits aid. A conversation ensues in which the sad life of the beggar, the series of misfortunes, the downward path, etc., are brought out.

3. The Capture of André.—The three patriots stop the inquiring stranger; the conversation in which André raises their suspicions and finally implicates himself, the search, the conference among the patriots, the decision to bring André to the American commander.

4. Columbus Before the Court of Spain.—Columbus explains his ideas and hopes, the sceptical and sarcastic questions of the ministers, the sympathetic

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questions of Isabella, the answers of Columbus, the final convincing argument, Isabella's offer of her jewels, etc. This topic allows for a skillful blending of exposition and dialogue, and for effective correlation of history and composition.

5. Cat-and-Mouse Story.—The following effort by an eighth-year pupil shows a commendable result. It is given in full because the topic and the organization will readily suggest to the teacher a host of similar situations appropriate for the needs of any class:

AN INCIDENT

Plump! Bing! Tarra-r-r! Bang!

"What in the world was that?" said I, startled by the noises which were heard from the cellar.

"There goes the shelf with the tin cans," answered my brother, turning a white face toward me.

"I guess there must be robbers down in the cellar," said I, trying to look scared, although I could hardly keep from laughing.

My brother looked to see if I was in earnest, but he soon discovered the deception, and we both laughed outright.

"That's Tabby hunting for mice," said I, and with that we each took a candle and crept down to the cellar.

The maltese cat met us with a glad "meouow," and we noticed that he was licking his chops in a satisfied manner.

The Cat's Story

"Well, you see it was this way," said the cat, when asked to relate the incident on the back fence to the assembly, who generally congregated for the usual evening concert. "I had been taking a nap on the trunk, when something stepped on my tail, and, turning around, I found Mr.

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Gray Ears and Mrs. White Tail sitting there and staring at me. With a cry I sprang toward them, but they succeeded in scurrying away with me close at their heels, but I caught Mrs. White Tail. I could have caught Mr. Gray Ears only I did not want to eat too much, so I let——"

Wiff! Poor Tabby toppled off the fence from the effect of a well-aimed shoe, which had just come from the top-story window of a house nearby. The audience soon dispersed, and all scattered to their respective homes.

The Mouse's Story

"Friends, countrymen and mice, I have just passed through the most thrilling experience that has ever befallen any of our great tribe. I have met our worst foe and vanquished him.

"You knew that I and Mrs. White Tail took a walk yesterday. When happening to cross the wood pile I discovered the cat sleeping on the trunk. I bravely walked over and stepped on his tail, so he would awake. The minute he tried to spring at me, I rushed at him. He turned and was going to run away, when he saw Mrs. White Tail, and quickly grabbing her in his mouth he ran away. I pursued him, but he outdistanced me, and so I had to come home without poor Mrs. White Tail."

6. On Board the Caravel.

ON BOARD THE CARAVEL

The following conversation took place between Columbus and his sailors in mid-ocean:

"Where are you taking us?" shouted the sailors.

"You are going on this journey for fame, and your mothers will be better off when we return," said Columbus. "We will never see our parents any more," replied the sailors sadly. "We will reach land in a few more days,"

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spoke Columbus hopefully. "We will see our death by that time," they shouted as they walked away towards the deck where other sailors were conversing secretly about their plans. Finally one sailor said, "Let's make him reverse the ship and take us home."

"That's a good idea; his life now lies in our hands," said the sailors. "Who will volunteer to take the message?" asked the sailors doubtfully. "I will," answered one sailor, who was attempting to stir up a mutiny aboard ship.

The sailor walking towards Columbus said, "Columbus, reverse the ship, and your life will be saved."

"No; I will keep on the voyage until I discover land for Spain," replied Columbus angrily, yet firmly.

"Is that your final answer," replied the sailor bitterly.

A shrill whistle was heard and the sailors soon appeared. They all crowded around Columbus.

"What does this mean?" asked Columbus, calmly.

"It means that you must reverse the ship, or we will throw you overboard."

"I will have you put in chains when we arrive home," retorted Columbus coolly. "We do not care, but we will give you just a half-hour to think the situation over," replied the sailors as they left Columbus. While looking in a westerly direction Columbus thought he saw land; he took a pair of spy glasses, and, sure enough, it was land. Columbus, now encouraged, shouted, "Land! Land!"

The sailors, hearing the cry, sprang from their seats and rushed upon the deck toward Columbus.

"Where is land?" asked the leader, impatiently.

"Look for yourselves," replied Columbus, handing him the spy glasses. The leader looked and saw islands not far away. They soon reached land, where, falling on their knees, with their faces turned toward heaven, they prayed that God might protect them.

By 8th Year Pupil.

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B. Imitation of Fables.—A second type of inventive composition that meets with popular response by the children is the construction of a fable in imitation of one that was studied as a model. The fable of "The Wolf and the Lamb" is read and its construction noted. Similar elements are suggested and the children construct their own fables, *e.g.*, "The Pike and the Minnow," "The Hen and the Worm," "The Pigeon and the Hawk." A fourth-year pupil in a foreign section of the city gave the following as his result:

THE HEN AND THE WORM

One bright day a hen started out to find some worms for her children. She right a way met a fat worm. She wanted to eat it, but she wanted, too, an excuse.

"How dare you clap on my door?" said the hen.

"How can I clap on your door, if I ain't got no hand," said the worm.

"You are the loafer that bites my children," said the fresh hen.

"You are wrong," said the worm, "How can I bite your children if I ain't got no teeth."

"If you didn't then your brother or your father did," said the hen. Whereupon she bounced upon the poor worm and carried it away.

A lad whose stay on our shores barely exceeded four months wrote on a topic all his own in trying to imitate the fable which tells of the rats in convention deciding on a plan to tie a bell on the cat's neck. The phase of American street life that struck him most inspired the following:

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THE BOYS AND THE POLICEMAN

One day boys was shooting crap so a policeman caught hime and brought to the station house.

And when they got free thay made a meeting and said, what shel we do to the policeman.

So one wise boy went up and said, we will put a bell on his neck.

So another boy went up and said, who will put the bell on his neck?

C. Ending a Story Whose Beginning Is Suggested to the Children.—This is another form of inventive composition the possibilities of which were discussed in a previous connection in Chapter IV.

D. Personification of Inanimate Objects. — A fourth popular form of inventive composition is the autobiography of an inanimate object. While these topics usually prompt successful results, the teacher must be careful not to personify an object that means little or nothing to the child. The autobiography of an eraser, of a coffee bean, of a package of tea, etc., are topics that allow for much correlation, but the child is nevertheless indifferent to the life history of these articles. The object chosen for personification must be one that thrills the child, stirs his imagination rather than his memory, or is at times a source of joy to him. The following are compositions by school children showing topics that were happily chosen:

THE BASEBALL'S STORY

"I was once a proud baseball, proud of my white glistening cover and the trade-mark so conspicuously placed on my

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head. My stitches were of the brightest red, and were so becoming to me that I was the most talked of person in our store. In fact the wagon-tongue bat lying on the shelf became so envious of me that he would gnash his teeth and would threaten that if he ever got a chance he would pay back the grudge he owed me. But what did I care for the mutterings of a miserable old bat. So the days passed on without any special happenings.

"One day as I was lying on the counter in my softly lined box a man came in and asked our salesman if he had any good baseballs. I was immediately chosen. 'That one will do,' said the man, taking me out of my soft box and placing me roughly into his pocket. 'Now, I'd like to see a bat,' continued the man. My enemy on the shelf was brought out and he also was purchased.

"I knew nothing until I felt myself being taken out of that hot stuffy pocket. When I beheld the light again, I uttered a sigh of relief. Turning around, I saw my old enemy, the wagon-tongue bat, grinning at me. This mortified me very much. I was then tossed to a man whom I had never seen before and he looked so queer in short trousers and striped stockings that in spite of my sadness I could not resist laughing at him. He took me in the palm of his hand and threw me so swiftly to the catcher, that I barely had time to catch my breath. 'Strike one,' I heard somebody call. One thing that attracted my attention on my way to the catcher was the manner in which the wagon-tongue was eyeing me. I was tossed to the pitcher. He twisted me in his fingers and curved his wrist so that I feared he would break it. I was again thrown, yet so queerly did I twist and turn that I became giddy and knew nothing until I found myself in the catcher's glove as before, and my enemy, the old wagon-tongue bat, rushing at me with great violence, but failing to hit me. 'Strike two,' the same voice cried. I was again thrown to the pitcher, who after twisting me in his fingers as usual delivered me. Crack! Oh, my! The wagon-tongue bat had carried out

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his threat at last and with a terrific whack sent me speeding into space. 'Ha, ha!' I heard him laugh. 'I have caught you at last, proud one.' I knew nothing until I found myself lying here in this dark crevice. How I came here I am unable to say, but my opinion is that after striking the ground I must have rolled into this dungeon. But now look at me; begrimed and dirty. I, who was once so proud and vain, am hidden from all the world, perhaps forever."

Brutus' Sword

"Oh! what a cruel life I have led," murmured a beautiful sword wearily, as it lay beside its dead master, the noble Brutus. "It seems, too, most strange, that I, praised as I have been, should have committed so many cruel deeds.

"When made I was one of the handsomest of my kind. While admiring myself I was clutched by a hand that showed firmness of character. Looking up I recognized my new master, the noble Brutus. I was bought on the Kalends of March, and lived in peace until the Ide of March. But on that day I unwillingly undertook to do the most wretched deed of all. I together with fifty others of my kind, all with their respective masters, Cassius, Casca, Metellus, Cimber, Decius, Trebonius and others, waited on the steps of the Capitol ready to assassinate the ambitious Cæsar. When Cæsar had been seated the murderous Casca crept up behind him and plunged his sword into Cæsar's body. As he did so, Cæsar jumped and shouted aloud, but in vain, for as he stood a shower of daggers pierced his breast. I was among the last to do this awful deed and as I ran through him he cried to my master, *'Et tu, Brutus.'* I burned for shame and when I was put into my scabbard I shed many a bitter tear.

"My life of cruelty was not over, for after Mark Antony had delivered his oration, my master was pursued by the citizens of Rome. He fled to Philippi, where a battle took place. Here I was used very frequently. But still worse

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was to come. When my master heard that Cassius was dead, feeling unable to face the enemy alone, he ordered his servant Strato to place me so that he might run against me and thus kill himself. Strato argued, but to no avail. At last he consented and now here I lie awaiting my miserable fate."

E. Imaginary Diaries.—These form another type of inventive exercise that brings enthusiastic responses from the children. The diary of a beggar, of a soldier, of a sailor, of Captain Peary at the Pole, of Livingstone and Stanley while on journeys in Africa, etc., are usually productive of gratifying results. These forms of invention can be multiplied to a number limited only by the child's ingenuity and the teacher's ability to conceive new situations.

VI. *Biographical Narratives.*—The lives of the inspirational figures of literature and history supply some of the topics for class composition. But as was observed heretofore, these must not receive more than their proportional allotment of the composition periods. In making the life history of any man the basis of a composition, teachers should try to avoid the old hackneyed sequence of birth, boyhood, manhood, death and lasting results of his work. The children should be encouraged to seek originality in the grouping of the facts, and should emphasize only the one or two great achievements that gave the individual the position he occupies in the history of civilization. There is no reason for such complete categories of details and petty facts as one habitually finds in classroom products. Treated in the traditional sequence

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referred to, there can be little or nothing that is inspirational in the biographies studied in the class. But the most distinguishing characteristic of a biographical study must be the inspiration which such a life stimulates. The model on the "Life of Hale," as given in Sykes' "English Composition for Grammar Grades," illustrates the proper organization and the proper relative value of facts in biographical narratives:

Nathan Hale

In 1776 Washington was endeavoring to capture the city of New York from the British. He needed to know the plans of his opponent, General Howe, and to have maps of the shores of the Hudson and the Sound.

Washington asked Knowlton to call his officers together, to tell them of the desperate state of affairs, and to ask for a volunteer. A common spy could not do the work, for it required a man who understood military plans and could make drawings. No one responded to the first appeal. Men who had no fear of death recoiled from the dishonor of a spy's fate. As Knowlton was urging them further, Nathan Hale entered and at once undertook the task. Any service done for one's country, he said, was noble. . . .

Hale received his last instructions from Washington, and, disguised as a school-master, he crossed from Harlem Heights to Long Island. For two weeks he was within the enemy's lines and made plans of all their defenses. His work done, he was staying at a small tavern on the shore waiting for the boat which would take him to safety. In his shoes were the drawings with full notes in Latin. But a Tory, a man said to be of his own kin, recognized him. The man went out, and a few minutes later word was brought Hale that a boat was approaching. He dashed out

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to meet it, and shouted greetings to his friends, as he thought—but found muskets leveled at his breast.

He was carried to the headquarters of General Howe. Hale made no secret of his name, rank, and errand, and there was no choice for Howe but to sentence him to the spy's fate, to be hanged.

Early next morning Hale stood on a ladder leaned against a tree. A rope was about his neck; the end of the rope was about to be thrown over a limb of the tree. The Provost Marshal asked him for a confession. Hale answered: "I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country." "Swing the rebel off!" was the command, and in a moment all was over.

The Provost Marshal had been unnecessarily cruel to the prisoner, and had destroyed the letters Hale had written to his friends, so that, as he said, "The rebels should never know they had a man who could die with such firmness." But Hale's dying speech was heard by a generous young British officer, Captain Montressor. Sent with a flag of truce to announce the execution, Montressor repeated the words to Captain Hull of the American forces. Such words can never die, and the memory of such men as Hale is immortal.

VII. *Letters.*—Letters, with their complete variety of form and content, come next in this list of types of expression. The early part of this chapter gives in detail suggestions and methods for letter writing. Letters may be (1) business; (2) social. In the latter group, we have (a) the formal, and (b) the informal. It is overstating the case to maintain that formal letters should receive no attention in the elementary school; they should receive but little consideration until the child develops a fair degree of proficiency in writing the informal letter and the busi-

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ness letter. The stiff formal letter with its expression of chilly sentiment is ill adapted to instil the enthusiasm that must characterize the composition lesson.

VIII. *Miscellaneous Suggestions.*—To this long list of possibilities we may add such topics as *reports* to newspapers; reports to the class on a book, picture study, etc. With children in the upper grades it is often desirable to unify this variety of forms of expression by having the abler children outline a *long story* or *a play* of three or four scenes. In the first lesson the plot is evolved; in each of the succeeding periods a logical part or a component literary unit is written until the whole task is completed. Such a story or play must in the nature of the case be composed of narration, description of places and people, exposition of processes and activities, argumentation, dialogues between characters—the whole variety of forms of composition studied in unrelated lessons. Interest is easily aroused and maintained and effort flows in plenty in such related and continuous work. Where composition is taught by some group method, it is found that the more proficient children produce results that are well worth dramatizing.

7. The Teacher.—The final inquiry, "How Can We Vitalize Composition?" was answered in terms of a number of constructive suggestions, the last of which counseled variety of form and content. The table of possibilities that is offered, though not scientifically accurate nor complete, shows the teacher what a rich field of subject-matter can be brought to the children. But the most potent factor that makes for efficiency

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in composition teaching is the teacher—his spirit, his zest, his life and enthusiasm, his faith in the ultimate ability of the children. The methods suggested must never be regarded as more than general guides; they show proper tendencies, correct goals, but they are not designed for accurate and absolute imitation. Each teacher must interpret the suggestions in terms of his own peculiar problems and seek to adjust them to the individual needs of his specific class. Without this personal interpretation and specific adjustment all methods are doomed to inevitable failure.

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PART II

THE FORMAL ASPECT OF COMPOSITION

CHAPTER IX

THE TEACHING OF SPELLING

Expressional vs. Formal Aspect of Composition.—It is obvious that the teaching of composition presents two phases: The first deals with the problem of ordering ideas and giving expression to them so that the meaning is conveyed, clearly and convincingly, to another mind. This expressional aspect of composition was treated in the first part of the book. But ideas must be expressed in commonly accepted forms of spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. This second phase of composition, the purely formal or technical aspect, must now be treated from the point of view of the teaching problems involved. The second part of this book will therefore concern itself with the teaching of spelling, meaning and use, dictation, memory gems and grammar.

Spelling Usually Tested, not Taught.—To children and teachers alike, the spelling lesson is usually a dull period and a hard memory grind. Despite the vig-

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orous drills in spelling, the results are poor. The writer's visits to classes led him to the conclusion that in most instances spelling is tested, not taught. Lists of varying lengths are assigned in various ways for memorization. The succeeding spelling lesson is occupied with a test to discover those children who know the words and those who do not. Problems and devices in the methodology of spelling have received more than passing attention, for spelling is rich in fads. The spelling matches, word analyses, and diacritical markings which were the boast of the teachers of the last generation have given way to contextual spelling, multiple sense appeal, exclusive muscular appeal, and phonogrammic grouping which are the methods of the teacher of to-day.

Objects of the Teaching of Spelling.—We shall be in a better position to estimate the relative worth of all these devices and to evolve a method of teaching spelling if we formulate in definite terms the ultimate ends which must be achieved in spelling lessons. (1) The dominant aim is *to inculcate the habit of writing the word correctly in context* while consciousness concerns itself primarily with the thought to be expressed. The child who writes correctly a word that his teacher dictates with exaggerated clearness while the mind focalizes on the form of the word in question has not attained the highest end in spelling. Can the child write this word correctly while he is lost in the thought that he is expressing? This is the standard by which good spelling must be judged. (2) A second aim is *to develop the ability of self-correction.* The spelling

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lessons must teach children simple rules of spelling, the use of the dictionary, and a method of word comparison so that they can correct the spelling in all their written work. (3) A third aim is *to make correct spelling a matter of deep concern* to the children so that they will gladly suffer the inconvenience of going to the dictionary, or make inquiries rather than put down incorrect forms of spelling. This "word conscience" can be developed in the higher grades through proper motivation in spelling lessons, in which teachers lead children to feel the social need of correct spelling.

Principles Guiding the Selection of Spelling Words.— How shall words be chosen for the spelling exercises of a grade? This is a matter of importance when we note the wide divergences among the lists suggested in standard spelling books.

1. *Spelling Words to be Taken from Expressional Rather than Interpretational Vocabularies.* — Each person is the possessor of two vocabularies. The first, the expressional vocabulary, is the sum total of the words he uses in all his writings and oral intercourse. But each one of us knows a greater stock of words than he employs. In listening to others and in reading, we meet words, the meanings of which are known to us but which we would nevertheless not use in our own speech. This is the interpretational vocabulary. Thus, a child in the eighth grade may know the meaning of *rectitude, mien, consecrate,* but only the unusual child would use them. These words are evidently part of the child's interpretational vocabulary. But every eighth-grade child uses *receive,*

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believe, judgment, prejudice, guarantee, repetition, and *separate* in his expressional exercises. Since the need for spelling is felt only in written intercourse, and since only those words which are in the expressional vocabulary will be used in writing, it follows that spelling words must be taken out of the expressional rather than the interpretational vocabulary.

An analysis of the spelling lists used in many classes will reveal the fact that this law is more honored in the breach than in the observance. Very often a class that averages ninety per cent. in formal spelling must be ranked seventy per cent. in the spelling of the composition and dictation exercises. In the desire to gather a rich and varied spelling list, the common words in the expressional vocabulary are overlooked and the words of the interpretational vocabulary are incorporated. Dr. Leonard P. Ayres tabulated the words found in about 2,000 social and commercial letters of representative teachers, lawyers, physicians, and business people. In all, about 24,000 words were listed, and only about 2,000 separate words were found. Of this latter number, about 750 appeared only once. Dr. Ayres found that 43 words were repeated so frequently that they made up half the whole number of words tabulated; seven-eighths of the whole number were 542 common words used with great frequency. "It is evident that the average letter writer does not begin to use even the number of words he learned in elementary school grades, for some spelling books contain over 10,000 separate words." Dr. Ayres made a further comparison of the

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words used in letters with the words in the usual spelling lists. Of the 414 words on the National Education Association's spelling lists which were used in Cleveland in 1908, 289 did not occur at all in any of the 2,000 letters. It is evident that a correct spelling list cannot be evolved by speculation on what words one ought to know. Experimental investigation will reveal a remarkably small list, which children must master before the sixth school year, and which will put them in possession of an expressional stock sufficient for ordinary correspondence after they have left school.

2. *Words to Be Tested Before Incorporation in Class or Grade List.*—All words selected for a class or grade list should be dictated to the children in natural context and then corrected. Only such words as are missed by a majority of the class ought to become part of the class list. Those that are misspelled by a few or even by a minority should be incorporated in the individual spelling list kept by each child. A test will readily reveal the fact that many words in the grade or class list can be spelled by a large part of the class and must therefore be transferred to the individual lists.

3. *Words to Be Selected with a View to Class Subjects.*—In assigning spelling words for any grade, it should be the practice to assign them in that class in which they will correlate with the other subjects. Words like *attribute, modify, dependent,* should be taught in the grade that begins formal grammar; *borough, county,* etc., in the grade that studies local ge-

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ography. In the teaching of spelling, correlation becomes a means of motivation.

Source of Spelling Words.—Assumed that spelling words will be selected in accordance with rational principles, the next problem concerns itself with the possible sources of these words. Chief among them we must mention:

1. *All Expressional Exercises.*—Teachers must be ever mindful of the fact that spelling tends to become highly formalized, because it lacks content and is taught without motive. But when all the children's written exercises—compositions, dictations, notebooks, test papers, etc.—are regarded as the first source of the spelling list, the spelling lessons become possessed, at once, of both content and motive. In reading any written work of the pupils, teachers will find those words that must become part of the spelling list.

2. *Terms Found Necessary in Class Subjects.*—All the subjects taught contain words and expressions that the children must use in their oral and written recitations. Words like *premium, commission, insurance, brokerage, remittance,* etc., will be contributed by the term's work in arithmetic. In the same way every subject will present its addition to the child's expressional vocabulary and, therefore, in the last analysis, to the spelling list.

3. *The Teacher's Experience.*—Every teacher has found that, regardless of the grade, certain words are generally misspelled by the children. Such words must, therefore, be incorporated in the spelling list

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without reference to the grade of the children. A teacher in a seventh-year class may find it necessary to submit words like *too, their, wear, awkward, believe, receive, proceed, procedure, judgment,* and *guarantee* to the regular spelling drill.

4. *Good Spelling Books.*—The disadvantages of spelling books are many; they will be discussed in another connection in this chapter. But it is evident that a good spelling book may be a helpful guide and a suggestive standard in terms of which one's own list may be judged. After a tentative list has been collected and arranged, it should be compared with the lists for the same grade found in standard spellers. This comparison will reveal at once many weaknesses and omissions which must be rectified. To make the spelling book the sole source of spelling words is obviously wrong, but to ignore it is an unjustifiable neglect of a valuable aid.

Media of Presenting Spelling Words.—The teacher who has selected her spelling list correctly and has had recourse to all useful sources is now confronted by the problem of the medium by means of which the words are to be presented to the class. The various media that are suggested must now be analyzed and their relative worth noted.

1. *Incidental Presentation.*—Many writers would abolish all formal presentation of spelling and rely upon the repeated but incidental and informal meeting of these words in the course of reading and studying. Chubb tells us, "Do not be fussy about it (spelling). Good reading, clear enunciation and the ear

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training that goes with it will do more for spelling than the routine of the spelling book. Write on the blackboard words that are generally misspelled, and let them be listed in the notebooks, by way of providing for the eye-minded and the motor-minded child, as well as for the ear-minded." *

The teacher, accustomed to the grind of the formal spelling drill and disheartened by the persistence of spelling errors, may be somewhat startled by this complete elimination of formal spelling. Experience teaches that incidental spelling in the average class in the ordinary public school is out of the question. Most children read little and write less. Their incidental experience with symbols will not suffice to give them a mastery of words. A psychological analysis of the problems of reading and spelling will reënforce this objection against incidental teaching of spelling. Words and phrases are read as wholes, and not by the synthesis of their component elements. Spelling is an analytical process that focalizes attention on constituent symbols in a given word. Reading is a process of thought acquisition. Spelling is a process of mastery of symbols in sequence, and is, therefore, no function in reading. When introduced in reading it develops habits that militate against rapid, thoughtful reading and make for slow word reading and lip movements.

2. *The Spelling Book.*—A medium of presenting spelling words that is now being revived is the spelling book. Its use is a moot question. Those in favor

* Chubb: The Teaching of English, p. 170.

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of a spelling book urge that it saves time and gives the teacher a rich list graded by a specialist. But assuming that the spelling book is the best on the market, we must remember that there is no agreement, thus far, on a common list of spelling words. A list suitable for one school may not be appropriate for another. Gradation in spelling is almost impossible, as neither length nor phonetic characteristics are the basis of classification; *mien,* although shorter than *freedom,* is considered more difficult, and *once,* although highly unphonetic, is regarded as simpler than *independent.* In addition to these limitations we must add that the spelling book makes the spelling list a series of words unrelated to other subjects, for it is not an outgrowth of difficulties encountered in written expressional exercises and motive is, therefore, lacking. The spelling book must be used, as was previously suggested, as a standard by means of which a teacher may judge the worth of her own list.

3. *The Teacher's List.*—A means of overcoming most of the limitations of a spelling book is the practice of requiring each teacher to collect and systematize her own list. In this way words selected are more appropriate to the grade and related to the written exercises of the children. Where a teacher's list is used it must be mimeographed so that time will not be lost in needless copying and words will not be miscopied by the children.

But a list, culled by teachers or textbook writers, is open to the serious criticism that mastery of any

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elements in a list is no guarantee of even approximate proficiency in using the same elements in natural context. As has been said before, children who spell correctly words that are dictated in lists by the teacher in a spelling test misspell these very words when they use them in their own compositions. It is essential that words be taught in the same associations in which they will be used later in life.

4. *The Teacher's List in Natural Context.*—It is evident from the objections to formal lists, that the list which is selected by the teacher and then incorporated into a natural text will overcome the limitations of the media previously suggested. After the teacher has decided on the spelling list, the words should be grouped and a context supplied for them. The first twelve words in a list selected by a fourth-year teacher were:

1. brought √	5. continent	9. success √
2. discover √	6. weave	10. enemy √
3. thankful	7. receive	11. courage
4. prison √	8. jealous √	12. Columbus √

Those words that can be related in any way are checked as noted above and a sentence is then woven about them. Thus; *"Jealous* of his *success,* the *enemies* of *Columbus brought* the *discoverer* of the New World back to Spain as a *prisoner,"* affords a context for seven words, which form the first day's spelling lesson. Very often it will be necessary to write as

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many as four sentences to include the words for a lesson. But if the selection is made, not from twelve words but from a larger part of the list, the text will follow more naturally. At times a stanza of a familiar poem or an extract from a selection in the reader will give this context. Thus an interesting context was afforded for two days' spelling work in a third-year class, by Stevenson's stanza:

> In *winter* I get up at *night*
> And *dress* by *yellow candle-light.*
> In *summer, quite* the other *way,*
> I have to go to bed by *day.*

These four lines suggest that a phonic basis may be selected for grouping the words in the formal list. Thus the word *night* suggests *light, way* suggests *day,* etc. Upon examining her list a teacher may find the words *would, could,* and *should,* or *extreme* and *supreme,* or *valleys, keys, toys, days, ladies, babies,* and *enemies* scattered through the term's work. It is advisable, therefore, to gather all phonic similarities together and teach them in the same lesson, thus supplanting a mechanical association by one that is logical. The old gradation of spelling based on the number of syllables is therefore giving way to gradation based on related meaning or phonic similarities. At regular intervals each child receives a mimeographed sheet giving in sentences, paragraphs, and stanzas the spelling words in proper context.

5. *Supplementary Lists.*—Spelling lists should be as flexible as possible, so that every teacher may feel

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free to modify the assignment in accordance with the dictates of personal judgment and experience with a particular class. It follows also that in large schools there must be some uniformity in requirements for the sake of the children as well as for convenience of supervision. For these reasons supplementary lists are advocated so that there may be three lists used by a teacher, the *grade list,* the *class list,* and the *individual list.*

The *grade list* is that list which is uniform for each grade in a school or in a school district. These words may be taught parallel with, or in advance of, the subjects from which they are taken, the aim being to prepare children for difficulties that must inevitably arise in their paths and thus prevent misspelling.

The *class list* is composed of those words which are misspelled by the majority of the class in all written exercises. The aim of this list is to eliminate inaccuracies that children have already acquired. This list varies with the class and with each term.

The *individual list* is kept by each child and varies necessarily with each child. Children must be required to list all words that they misspell in written exercises but which are not taught in class. These lists should be subject to regular inspections, and spelling periods should be set aside when each child tests his neighbor on the words in the individual list. Children may be told to write all the words they can recall in a limited time. These words are corrected and the incorrect ones are then added to the individual list. In this way a child is learning not only those

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words which the majority of his classmates cannot spell, but also those that sum up his personal weaknesses in spelling.

Method of Teaching Spelling.—Assuming the proper selection of words and the proper medium for presenting them to the class, we must pass on to the consideration of the method of teaching spelling. The complete method has three distinct parts: 1. *the teaching,* in which the child learns under the teacher's supervision the phonic peculiarities of the words. 2. *the independent study,* in which the child tries to master the words taught in class. 3. *the test,* in which the teacher seeks to ascertain the child's mastery of the words taught and studied.

Procedure in Teaching Words.—1. *Meaning.—The* first step must be the reading of the text that contains the words to be taught and the attempt to explain their meaning. Since proper spelling lists come from the children's expressional rather than interpretational vocabularies, little or no time will be consumed in making clear the meaning of the words.

2. *Accurate Pronunciation.*—Unusual care must be taken to guarantee accurate pronunciation of each word. The teacher should offer the pronunciation and should then call upon children individually to sound the word. Concert recitation should be used with caution and only after a sufficient number of children have individually pronounced the word correctly. Mispronunciation or slovenly pronunciation lies at the root of most faults in spelling. A foreign child wrote in his composition, *He vent vid me,* but

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later in the day, when his teacher dictated the same sentence, he wrote, *He went with me.* The cause for the change is obvious: in the first case, the child sounded these words to himself and spelled accordingly; in the second case, the child's ear heard the correct sound and reproduced it accurately. What is true in this case is true of all children—incorrect auditory images prompt incorrect spelling.

In teaching correct pronunciation, the method of imitating the teacher should not be the sole procedure. Words should be marked diacritically and the children should be called upon to sound them. Other words should be syllabicated as a cue to proper pronunciation. In later classes the words should be found in the dictionary and the pronunciation evolved. Time spent on careful pronunciation is time saved in teaching spelling.

3. *Syllabication and Division into Phonogrammic Units.*—The difficulties in most words are removed in the next step, the syllabication of the word or its division into known phonic units. Words like *emancipation, nationality, modification, comparative,* etc., are purely phonic; the child that can syllabicate them and recognize the known phonograms of *tion, man,* etc., has no difficulty in spelling these words.

4. *When Necessary, Focalize Attention on the Difficulty in a Word.*—Many words are purely phonic in all but one respect. It is much better to have the child's attention directed to this difficulty exclusively than to drill on the whole word. Thus, if the word is *supreme,* it is related to *extreme* and the *eme* of each

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is underlined in colored chalk on the board. In the case of the word *altogether,* the rule is taught and the child now knows the spelling of *always, also,* etc. If the word is *separate,* we elicit that it means "cut into parts." Since *part* is spelled with an *a, separate* is spelled sep*a,* not sep*e,* as children repeatedly do. In the case of phonic anomalies like *comb, pneumonia,* etc., the peculiarity is singled out and attention called to it by encircling it with colored chalk or by writing it in different forms and in exaggerated sizes. Every means must be taken to focalize attention on the phonetic anomaly.

5. *The Class Drills.*—Rigorous drills should follow the instruction step in spelling. These drills must be spirited, planned to stir maximum self-activity, and designed to appeal to children of different sense gifts. Among the important forms of drill in spelling we may mention the following:

a. Individual Oral Spelling. Various children are called upon in promiscuous order to spell the word as the rest of the class listens to the spelling and sees the forms on the board.

b. Light Concert Spelling. The class as a whole may be asked to spell the word orally in concert as each child follows visually the teacher's pointer going from letter to letter.

c. Flash Method. The word is written on a card or on the blackboard and is exposed to the view of the class for only two or three seconds. At the end of that time various children are called upon to spell the word as they saw it. If the class is warned of

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the limited time that will be allowed and the concentration necessary, the results are usually gratifying.

d. Motor Appeal. The word to be learned is written by the children with their fingers in the air or on the desk or on paper with pencil. With many children this proves to be the strongest sense appeal.

e. Visualization. A popular means of drill is through strong visual appeal. The visualization drills may be given in many forms. The simplest of these drills is to have the children look steadily at the word written in unusually large size on the board. At the end of a limited time the children are asked to shut their eyes and "see" the word. Those who cannot "see" the word with eyes shut are permitted to look at the word again and then try to visualize it with eyes shut. When all children can "see" the word, they are asked to spell it as they "see" it.

Another method of conducting visualization drills is especially applicable to higher classes. Three or four words are selected for simultaneous drill and are written on the blackboard either in one line or in a column. A word is erased and then a child is called upon to spell the word that must be replaced. This procedure is repeated with each of the words. Later in the term two words are erased, e. g., the second and the fourth, and children are called upon to spell "the word that was in the second place," or "the word that was in the fourth place." This is usually a spirited and an interesting drill.

f. Dictionary. Another means of drill on words

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is to have the class locate the word in the dictionary. The effort in finding the proper page and column, in comparing the word on the board with the word in the dictionary, in noting the mode of syllabication, arouses enough self-activity and forms enough associations to give permanence to the impression that the word makes.

These drills are designed to give variety, speed, and interest to the spelling periods. It must be remembered, however, that no one word is to be subjected to all these forms of drill. The method of drill should change with each succeeding word so that the elements of variety and novelty give spirit and enthusiasm to the lesson.

General Considerations Governing Drills in Spelling.— It is obvious that drills in spelling in order to be effective must make a multiple sense appeal; they must impress the visual-minded, the auditory-minded, and the motor-minded children. Children should be taught as early as possible that the senses are not equally efficient; that they vary with each individual; that one can find out, by "self study," whether he is visual, auditory, or motor minded. In a properly organized educational system, children should be tested in the psychological laboratories for these facts. But in the absence of these tests much can be done by the pupils themselves. The child who discovers his special sense gift can save himself needless memory drill.

In the past the visual appeal was thought to make the most vital contribution to the general image of

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the word. But recent psychological investigations tend to prove that it is the motor appeal that makes permanent the graphic character of a word and habituates its writing. Experiments with patients suffering from aphasia and agraphia show that although the visual center must make its contributions if we are to write words easily, writing can be accomplished without these contributions. Adults and children were taught the Greek alphabet in two ways. One group was blindfolded and learned the letters by tracing them with their fingers; the other group learned them through visual experience. When the results were tabulated they bore out Professor O'Shea's contentions, "The visual image is not the all controlling factor. . . . As development occurs, the visual imagery takes on even more the simple function of mere suggestion. . . . It (visual imagery) does not appear to be essential to the graphic reproduction of auditory words."

The practical estimate of the relative importance of the contributions made by the various senses reenforces the conclusion of psychological investigations as to the vital importance of the motor appeal. The primary object in spelling is to reduce the *writing* of the word to habit. Oral spelling and visual appeals are used only as aids toward permanent fixation, but neither has worth in social intercourse. The child who wins the oral spelling match but who hesitates in writing these words is a poor speller, while his neighbor who is utterly confused in oral spelling but who writes the words automatically has

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reached a high level of proficiency. Since spelling is made necessary by written intercourse the written appeal must be considered the most important form of spelling drill.

Independent Study of Spelling.—Many children need no further drill than was outlined in the discussion of the procedure in the teaching of spelling. But in every class there are pupils whose impressionability and retention are weak and further memory appeals are necessary. Only these latter children require additional drill, *e. g.,* writing spelling words in and out of context. The practice of excusing from further drill those children for whom the class spelling lesson is sufficient will tend to intensify attention during the period of instruction.

Teaching Children to Study Spelling.—In later grades children should be taught how to study spelling without the teacher's aid and direction. A paragraph in one of the textbooks should be assigned for this purpose. Elicit from the class that the first task must be a selective one in which they eliminate such words as offer no difficulties either because they are known or because they are purely phonetic in their spelling. The words that merit attention are then looked up in the dictionary for meaning, if necessary, and for pronunciation and syllabication. Children in a seventh-year grade when asked to do this with such words as *salient, surety, soliloquy, siphon,* etc., showed very clearly that they lacked an elementary knowledge of the alphabetic sequence in the dictionary and of diacritical marks. After the dictionary

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work is accomplished children must be led to detect that phonic element in each word that renders it difficult. That done, they can now follow any of the forms of drill used in the class.

Study lessons in spelling may take other forms. A list of words like *consider, companion, tax, pleasure, value, adapt, measure, favor,* etc., is written on the board. The children are told to add *able* to each and then look up the spelling in the dictionary to see if any changes are necessary. This task completed, each child must try to formulate a rule in spelling to govern such cases or must try to find the suitable rule in the "Rules for Spelling" given in his dictionary. Such study lessons are means of developing judgment, initiative, power of organization, and self-reliance, and afford a natural method of teaching children those mechanical elements in the use of the dictionary that every school graduate should know.

The Test in Spelling.—In current methods of testing children's ability to spell, the teacher dictates the list of words taught and the children write these in a column. The correct form is then shown or recited and each child checks his neighbor's inaccuracies. When the papers are returned to their owners, all words misspelled are written correctly a given number of times. This writing degenerates into careless penmanship, in which the child is hardly conscious of the phonic elements and especially of those that gave him trouble.

Test Ability to Use Word in Context.—We have need for a method that is personal and constructive

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and that tests the child's ability to use the words in a natural context of his own. In the test period the teacher should dictate the word and the child should be required to write a sentence for it. Oral spelling is not a test; it is a means of further drill and an aid toward retention. Only when the child, intent on a sentence, writes the dictated word correctly from force of habit, is he giving evidence of his mastery of the word.

Spelling Record in Books.—The tests in spelling should be written in notebooks rather than on loose sheets of paper. A notebook record of such work is cumulative; it shows teacher and pupil, at a glance, the curve of progress. A convenient arrangement, shown in the accompanying diagram, divides the page into two columns, the wider one for the sentences containing the words dictated, and the narrower for the insertion of correct forms for all misspelled words. Each teacher must decide on the best means of correct-

Date	Rating	Jan. 5, 1913	95%
Sentences containing words dictated by the teacher	Correct form of words misspelled	1. The friends were very sad when the time came for them to *seperate*. 2.	*separate*

ing spelling, whether by neighbors, by children themselves, by monitors or by herself. But in writing the misspelled word correctly the child should be required

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to mark in some way that phonic element which is a source of trouble to him.

Record of Misspelled Words.—Teachers will do well to devise some means by which a record can be kept which would show the number of children who misspelled each word and the prevailing errors made in these words. Such a record would be an excellent index of the amount of drill that should be given on various words in the following terms and the phonic elements that should be emphasized in teaching them. In upper grades the teacher can easily be relieved, by a reliable pupil, of most of the mechanical work entailed by such a record. Examination of these records, kept for only one term, leads to the conclusion that the following data sum up the spelling difficulties of pupils in upper grades of the elementary school:

1. Violation of the Monosyllabic Rule. Words ending in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel double the final consonant if the suffix begins with a vowel; e. g., drop*ping,* swim*ming,* swim*mer,* plan*ning vs.* look*ing,* lock*ing,* etc.

2. Violation of the Polysyllabic Rule. Same rule as the above in polysyllabic words when the accent is on the last syllable; e. g., begin*ning,* benefit*ing.*

3. Words ending in final *e,* drop the *e* when the suffix begins with a vowel; final *e* is retained if the suffix begins with a consonant; e. g., *coming, riding, management,* etc.

4. Exceptions to preceding rule; e. g., *judgment, truly, argument, acknowledgment, wholly,* etc.

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5. Use of *ie* and *ei;* e. g., rec*ei*ve, bel*ie*ve, s*ei*ze, mis-ch*ie*f, etc.

6. Plurals of words ending in y; e. g., all*y*, all*ies;* alle*y*, alle*ys;* enem*y*, enem*ies;* valle*y*, valle*ys*, etc.

7. Plurals of words ending in *f;* e. g., lea*f*, lea*ves*.

8. Words compounded on *all*, drop one *l;* e. g., *al*ways, *al*together, etc.

9. Difficulties of silent letters; *sovereign, answer, debt, column, autumn, solemn, cupboard, doubt, dough, island, neighbor,* etc.

10. Difficulties due to mistaken consonants; e. g., *conceal, clothes, grocer, medicine, anchor,* etc.

11. Difficulties due to mistaken vowels, especially in final syllables; e. g., begg*ar*, sug*ar*, gramm*ar*, edit*or*, etc.

12. Difficulties due to tendency to insert letters; e. g., *immage* for image, *wellfare* for welfare, *woodden* for wooden, *tresspass* for trespass, and *truely* for truly.

13. Difficulties due to omission of letters; e. g., *safty* for *safety, ninty* for *ninety, asend* for *ascend, goverment* for *government, disapoint* for *disappoint, temtation* for *temptation,* etc.

14. Miscellaneous Difficulties; e. g., *separate, awkward, guarantee, repetition, proceed, procedure, precede, supersede, benefit, description, occurrence, occur, occasion,* etc.

This list will undoubtedly be modified in each school and in each class in the light of further experience but it gives the supervisor and teachers a working basis

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of real difficulties that must be met in the spelling lessons of every grade.

Enriching the Spelling List.—There should be included in the spelling list useful homonyms, abbreviations, rules of spelling, and proper names. These are part of the expressional stock necessary in all correspondence. Proper names and abbreviations can be taught in the same method that is used for the regular spelling words. Homonyms must always be presented in contrasting sentences, such as, *"There* they stand holding *their* hats in *their* hands," for the association which gives them permanence is the contrast. In presenting them we should lead children to infer from the text (a) the elements of similarity, and (b) the elements of difference. This should be followed by a drill that seeks to make their proper use habitual. Rules of spelling are best taught inductively in study lessons, as was outlined in the topic "Study Lessons in Spelling" in this chapter.

Supervising Auxiliary Lists.—Spelling lists cannot be enriched as was suggested unless supervising officers take the initiative in the matter of allotting proper names, abbreviations, homonyms, and rules of spelling to the various grades. In most schools visited by the author teachers are held responsible for "useful rules of spelling" or "necessary proper names." It is evident that this general assignment to all teachers means either total neglect of these lists or an attempt to teach all in each grade. The supervisor must collect all useful homonyms, rules of spelling, proper names and abbreviations and then, in con-

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ference with teachers, decide on a gradation of these lists and an apportionment of each list among the various grades. Each teacher having a certain number of the facts to teach can give them the attention and the drill that will make them part of the permanent expressional stock of each child.

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CHAPTER X

THE MEANING AND USE OF NEW WORDS

THE ENRICHMENT OF VOCABULARY

Shall There Be Formal Instruction in the Meaning and Use of New Words?—Many teachers of elementary grades have characterized formal lessons on the meaning of unfamiliar words and expressions as sheer waste of time and effort. It is their opinion that growth of vocabulary must be informal and incidental in the course of reading and social intercourse. In support of their conclusions they cite their own experiences: children remember the meaning of very few of the new words taught; their sentences are always artificial; the "meaning and use" list is usually unrelated to other subjects; the need for the meaning of these new words is not felt in their own lives; those children who have a language sense and who read have a vocabulary that is rich and varied, and those who lack this sense do not develop it in formal lessons in "meaning and use." A cursory investigation will undoubtedly bear out these contentions but an analysis of these indictments reveals them to be the results of poor methods of instruction. If the "meaning and use" list is properly selected, if each word arises in a need felt by the class, if natural drills are provided, the serious

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limitations of the current "meaning and use" lesson will disappear, for they are limitations that are not inherent in this form of language exercise. It is the aim of this chapter to evolve a method that possesses these corrective influences.

Selection of the "Meaning and Use" List.—The proper selection of the new words whose meanings are to be taught often determines the final efficiency of the lessons. We must omit, therefore, (a) most technical words; (b) common words used in an unusual sense, as, "This was a happy *conceit* of the author"; (c) such words as can be really understood only by a mature mind; (d) subtle distinctions in synonyms. At the beginning of the term the teacher should not have a single word in the list. In the course of the day's work words will arise which the children do not know and upon which the meaning of the text depends. When such a situation arises in the teaching of any subject, whether it be arithmetic or reading, the teacher has an opportunity to add to the "meaning and use" list. But not all new words become part of the formal lesson. As a new word arises the teacher must decide whether it is reasonable to expect children of her grade to have it in their expressional vocabularies. If she decides in the negative, the meaning of the word should be told to the class and the lesson should continue without further attention to it. Should the decision be affirmative, the word is written on a large cardboard or on an unused part of the blackboard after the meaning is given. The children thus see the source

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of these words and ample motive for a formal lesson is given. It is essential that most of the new words be eliminated and that attention be confined to those that are of greatest worth for the children.

Methods of Teaching Meaning of New Words.—There is no fixed method of teaching the meaning of new words. Each type of word necessitates a different mode of treatment. Chief among the many methods we have the following:

1. *Deductive or Direct Telling.*—When it is necessary that technical words be taught or when words have a meaning that cannot readily be inferred from the text, the method of direct telling must be used. In modern methodology the inductive or development method has become a fetish. We must realize that there are teaching situations in which deductive teaching may be used without apology. Words like *mythology, sprite, aqueduct* must often be taught in this deductive method to young children. Then, too, when new words arise in a literature or a history lesson it shows lack of judgment of relative values to halt the lesson in question in order to develop the new word by inductive treatment. In all such cases the meaning of the word should be given and the forward movement of the lesson should not be sacrificed.

2. *Objective Method.*—When clear imaging must be attained with children whose apperceptive stock lacks that experience which will enable them to construct the mental picture from verbal expression, a

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picture or the object itself is of greatest service. The child who has never seen a *wigwam*, a *tomahawk*, a *mariner's compass*, etc., must be taught what these terms represent by means of some graphic appeal.

3. *Inductive or Context Method.*—When the new word is one whose meaning is always made clear by the context, the inductive method is to be preferred. If the word *chagrin* is to be taught, the teacher uses it in a number of sentences, each of which tends to bring out its meaning. The teacher then asks the class to substitute appropriate synonymous expressions for *chagrin*, and the meaning is thus elicited. Although it is a method which costs dearly in time, it nevertheless has its compensating advantages —maximum self-activity is aroused, each child is put in the position of discoverer rather than recipient, the impressions are more lasting, the meaning is clearer, and the child learns a method which he can use in post-school days.

4. *Dramatization.*—A method very similar to the objective method but one which is characterized by its exclusive motor appeal is dramatization. When the pupils' vocabularies are so meager that they can obtain meaning from neither the context nor the teacher's explanation, the word should be acted out if it lends itself to such treatment. This is the device used almost exclusively with foreigners who know no English. Expressions like *with arms akimbo, he strutted about, a frowning face*, etc., when dramatized, convey meaning clearly and with economy of

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time to children whose language possessions are very limited.

5. *Using the Dictionary.*—Most words are so poorly defined in the abridged editions of the dictionaries used by schools that the child finds a synonym as new to him as the word which he looked up. But despite this handicap the habit of using the dictionary should be inculcated in children as soon as their capabilities will allow. The gradation and the scope of the lessons necessary to give children this mastery of the dictionary were outlined in the discussion on the teaching of spelling.* It must be emphasized and reëmphasized that the legitimate time for the use of the dictionary is the formal "meaning and use" period, in home work, or in seat work. It should rarely be used during any lesson in geography, history, nature study, arithmetic, or reading.

6. *Etymological Analysis.*—In the second half of the school course children must begin to study the most common prefixes, suffixes and roots used in the English language. Carefully compiled lists for school use give about thirty prefixes, twenty suffixes, and about thirty-five roots. If these were divided among the grades, beginning with the fifth year, each grade would average about five prefixes, three suffixes, and five roots per term. It is obvious, therefore, that with a little drill children can be taught those necessary language elements which would enable them to evolve the meaning of such words as *depose, supersede, descent, circumspect, transparent, transmit, su-*

* *See* pp. 172, 175.

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perstructure, etc., by a process of etymological analysis. Lessons in etymology should be thoroughly inductive. If a prefix is to be taught, a number of words beginning with it should be placed on the board. Children should then be required to give or find the meaning of each word. The class must then be led to perceive that all these words have similar beginnings. Through a series of questions we must elicit that these words also have a similar element in their meanings. It then becomes evident that the common prefix produces the common thought in each word and the function of the prefix is discovered by each child. The lesson concludes with an application of this knowledge to new words having the same prefix. Spelling books and elementary English books are replete with exercises and drills which seek to apply these etymological elements and make their meaning a permanent possession of the children.

How Make the Use of New Words Habitual.—The vital aim in the "meaning and use" lesson is evidently to make each new word learned a part of the child's active expressional vocabulary. To achieve this end we must teach the use of new words by a method which duplicates the method of learning new words outside the classroom. It is for this reason that no "meaning and use" list should be organized in advance. The teacher should wait until the class sees the need for the meaning of certain words. After the meaning is taught by one of the methods explained, the teacher must use the word in a number of sentences to show the children its value. Volunteers are now called

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upon. It is not wise to force children to use the word too early in the lesson. After a number of voluntary answers have been accepted the teacher may insist on having the word used by any child designated. If a pupil cannot think of an original sentence in which the word in question applies, the child may be allowed either to paraphrase or modify a sentence already given or to formulate a sentence around an incident suggested by the teacher. Thus, if, for the word *venture,* one child offered the sentence "Washington did not *venture* to fight the English army on Long Island," another child who cannot give an original sentence should be allowed to give, "In the retreat through Manhattan Island Washington did not *venture* to fight the enemy"; or the teacher might suggest, "Columbus—earth round—unknown seas," and the child might reasonably be expected to say, "Columbus *ventured* across unknown seas." Every means must be taken to lead the child to *feel the value* of the word and then to *desire to use* it.

But this mere formal use will not make the word part of the child's expressional vocabulary. There must be spontaneous use in answer to a definite need. The "meaning and use" chart must, therefore, be constantly before the class. On every occasion, in every explanation, and in every command the teacher must use as many of these words as she can. Children should be encouraged to use them in all recitations and in answer to every question; if necessary, rewards in the form of praise and even marks should be used to stimulate an interest and a desire to use

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these words in all communications. When children write their compositions they should have the chart before them and should attempt to use as many in the list as possible. This insistence on the use of the word will make it imperative that the same chart be kept many days and that few words be taught. It is probable that in this procedure only half or even a third of the number of words usually taught will be taken up, but we may rest unconcerned, for every means has been taken to make these words part of the natural and spontaneous expressional vocabulary.

Definitions.—Much time and useful energy are dissipated in teaching definitions in all subjects. The notion persists that ability to formulate or reproduce set definitions measures proficiency in a branch of knowledge. This standard fails absolutely when applied to life. Few people can define that which is part of their lives. The electrician, unable to define electricity, proceeds with his work intelligently and achieves the end he seeks; the judge, unable, perhaps, to define justice satisfactorily, nevertheless metes it out daily; the teacher of ethics, unable to define morality, nevertheless inspires in his pupils a love for right conduct. In school, especially in grammar and "meaning and use" lessons, the definition is elevated to a place that almost glorifies it. We must insist that formal definitions be relegated in teaching to the same plane of relative unimportance that they occupy in practical life, for function, not definition, determines use and therefore importance in life.

In recitation of "meaning and use" lessons teachers

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should require pupils to give a sentence for the given word before stating the definition. If the sentence is both original and correct, the child knows the function of the word; its definition will add little to its comprehension. Let the reader select from the page a few words that are constantly used by him and then attempt to formulate satisfactory definitions, and he will realize the relative worth of function and definition. If, therefore, a notebook record must be made of these words, the page should be divided into three columns, the word should be written in the first, the sentence in the second, and the definition, if deemed necessary, in the third. The notebook arrangement would take the following form:

Word	*Original Sentence*	*Definition*
1. observation	1. The astronomer makes his observations of the heavens with a telescope.	1. A careful noting.
2.	2.	2.

Sentences that are isolated and so worded that they do not indicate the meaning of the word should be discouraged from the very beginning. Sentences must be taken from the reading, the geography, and the history that are taught as well as from the round of experiences that form the child's life. "The man is *courageous,*" has no relation to any of the subjects

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taught in the grade and does not indicate the characteristics possessed by a courageous person.

The Supplementary Means of Increasing Vocabulary.—The formal "meaning and use" drills are not the only means of increasing the child's vocabulary. Although the other agents are often less direct, they are nevertheless not less effective in many cases. Among these, we must include the following:

1. *Study of Synonyms.*—A formal drill on a list of synonyms, e. g., *discover* and *invent, bring* and *fetch, content* and *satisfied,* etc., usually resolves itself into subtle analysis but does little to add vital elements to the child's vocabulary. Unless these pairs of synonyms arise naturally in the child's experience, they had better be neglected. Much can be done through drills on synonymous expressions. The teacher selects an expression used too frequently by the children and subjects that to a process of variations. For some reason which the teacher could not explain a class was using the expression "mad with," as in "He was mad with joy, excitement, anger," etc. This was put on the board and by questions and suggestions the teacher elicited that the general idea of the sentence "He was mad with joy" could be expressed by "He was overjoyed," "He was beside himself with joy," "His joy knew no bounds," etc. Thus the expression that had become stereotyped through overuse gave way to more varied sentence structure. Such a drill takes stock of each child's verbal possessions and brings words known but not used into active expression. The *variation method* suggested

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in the study of composition is the most elaborated form of these drills on synonymous expressions.

2. *The Library and Reading Circles.*—Every effort must be made to interest children in the library so that they will be eager to avail themselves of every privilege that it offers. Very often much can be done through the organization of reading circles that meet regularly for discussion of books read since the last meeting. The child that contracts the reading habit soon gives evidence of new language possessions. He knows more words in the reading lesson, his sentences are better in form and in content, and his general knowledge grows beyond the confining limits of personal experience.

3. *Oral Composition in Reading Lessons.*—The selection that is read in class should be subdivided into its logical parts. After the first division is read it should be subjected to a series of questions which call for a reproduction and a discussion on the text. Children should be encouraged to appropriate words and expressions of the author. If the child, in formulating his answer, should look at the page and elect to incorporate almost an entire sentence, he should be encouraged, for he sees the value and experiences the need of this phraseology. He has taken the first step toward adding a good expression to his meager vocabulary.

4. *Etymology and the Habit of Using the Dictionary.*—In the discussion of the various methods of teaching the meaning of new words, we noted that a knowledge of the common etymological elements and

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a habit of using the dictionary are of vital importance to the child because they give permanent means of enlarging vocabulary.

5. *The Subjects in the Curriculum.*—Every subject that is taught adds to the child's stock of expressions. In grammar *modify* and *dependent* are only two of many useful words that are learned. In like manner arithmetic, geography, history, and nature study make their permanent contributions to vocabulary.

6. *Memorization and Recitation.*—When children memorize what they understand and appreciate and then recite, not to prove to the teacher that a given text was memorized in obedience to a command, but because of a rational motive, they are incorporating many necessary words and expressions in their own vocabularies. The details of the method that must govern these memorization lessons will be discussed in the chapter on "Memory Gems."

7. *Participation in Social Intercourse.*—Vocabularies grow, usually, in response to conscious needs. When, therefore, the social life of the child necessitates ready and frequent speech, the mind acquires an ever-increasing stock of words to meet this need. Children who belong to social clubs and participate in the discussion of the business before the group, or who take active part in the administration of the pupils' self-government scheme in the school, usually give evidence of growing vocabularies. Children should, therefore, be encouraged to affiliate themselves with some group and to become active participants in its social affairs.

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CHAPTER XI

DICTATION: TEACHING THE FORMAL ASPECT OF COMPOSITION

There is lack of unanimity of opinion among teachers as to the function of the dictation lesson. To many it is merely an opportunity to test pupils' knowledge of the formal phase of language. It is evident that dictation for such a purpose is of little importance, unless we add a preceding function—to teach the laws governing the purely formal elements of written speech. We must posit, definitely, the aims of dictation before we proceed with the method of class instruction.

Objects of Dictation Lessons.—We will now consider the several objects of dictation lessons. (1) *They teach the technicalities of written composition.* All written composition has two aspects, we noted: the expressional and the formal aspect. Ideas cannot group themselves logically, clear and forceful sentences cannot form, when the mind is troubled with matters of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and penmanship. It is the function of the dictation lesson to teach these technical elements and thus set free the mind to give itself exclusively to the expressional elements in written composition.

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Among the other aims of the dictation lesson we may mention the following: (2) *It teaches spelling in a natural form.* In the spelling lesson the child learns those words that present some difficulty to a majority of his class; but in the dictation lesson there is revealed to the child his own shortcomings. (3) *It makes the ear sensitive* to spoken language and thus trains for better auditory perception of the spoken tongue. (4) *Rapid as well as neat penmanship is developed.* There is great danger in penmanship teaching, that neatness and accuracy of form will be acquired at the cost of speed. Teachers used to put a premium on the slow, painful drawing of letters, failing to realize that speed as well as legibility must be attained. In the dictation lesson the penmanship must necessarily be more rapid. (5) In a correct method, *concentration is developed* in the process of dictation. (6) *Habits of self-criticism and self-correction are acquired* by the children, for every dictation lesson ends with a correction by the children of their products.

The Choice of the Selection to Be Dictated.—The ends to be attained in a dictation lesson are often defeated by poor selection of the text that is dictated. It is necessary, first, that *each selection should illustrate only one point* in the technicalities of language. Thus, one paragraph is chosen because it shows how to write social titles; another because it illustrates the use of commas in a series, or the use of quotation marks; still another because some rule of capitalization is applied. That selection which can be used to

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teach any one of a half-dozen facts of language usually teaches nothing.

A second requisite insists that *the successive texts to be dictated be graded and so organized that they repeat a law until its application becomes habitual.* An examination of the dictation exercises to-day discloses the fact that teachers in every class are trying to teach all the rules of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization in one term. Not until these rules are graded and allotted in limited numbers to each grade will their use become habit. When each teacher knows that she is responsible for only three definite rules of punctuation, four in capitalization, and two in spelling, she can so grade her dictation selections that the repetition will make them permanent possessions of the children.

Third, it is necessary that the selection be *suitable in theme and language.* Why dictate anything as insipid as "John bought paper, pens, ink, blotters, and blank books. Coming home he traveled by car, train, bus, and bicycle. On his way he saw Mary, James, William, and Henry." The language of the text ought to be above the children's literary level, although on their plane of comprehension. In current articles on dictation found in pedagogical journals, fervid pleas are made for selections that inculcate lessons of ethics and patriotism. This is evidently sentimentalism gone astray. No practical teacher reserves part of the lesson on the use of the semicolon for an appeal to an ideal of conduct. Ethics and patriotism must be taught in content lessons,

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in history, in literature—subjects with human backgrounds and vibrant with the emotions and impulses of life.

Procedure in the Dictation Lesson.—A complete dictation lesson requires a minimum of two periods and has three distinct parts. The first period is occupied with the problem of teaching the new formal element of language; the second period covers the second part of the lesson in which the fact taught is tested, and the third part deals with the correction of the children's results. We must follow the procedure through these successive parts.

1. *The Teaching Period.*—Let us assume that the aim is to give a first lesson on the use of quotation marks. The teacher dictates pairs of sentences which follow the type form of, *Lawrence said that his sailors should not give up the ship,* and, *Lawrence said to his sailors, "Don't give up the ship."* Children are called upon to write these on the board, putting one under the other. Through questions the teacher then elicits, first, the difference in thought in each pair of sentences, viz., the narration of an incident as opposed to the repetition of the words of another, and second, the need of indicating this difference by some form of punctuation. The teacher then shows children the correct form of direct quotations and leads them to conclude that in using the words of another we must have (a) comma, (b) quotation marks, and (c) capitalization. Sentences which have been written incorrectly on the blackboard are now corrected in the light of the rule of punctuation that was evolved.

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More sentences may be written and incorrect punctuation may be corrected until the end of the first period. This ends the teaching part of the dictation lesson.

2. *Testing for Mastery of Language Fact Taught.* —In the following period a selection that illustrates the use of the rule for direct quotations is dictated to the class. In all classes below the seventh year it is advisable to show the children the selection the day preceding the dictation. True, this is not the mode of dictation in after life, but the child in the fourth or fifth school year is not ready for the direct dictation of the commercial world. It is unwise to force the child to commit errors, even though they are all corrected, for the mind may carry away wrong forms. We must constantly guard against the commission of errors by forestalling them. Hence in the early classes children are shown the selection and attention is directed to certain spellings, punctuations, capitalizations, and arrangements. On the following day the selection is dictated. For the lesson taught above an appropriate text would be the following:

THE DEATH OF WOLFE AT QUEBEC

Wolfe, weary and sick, kept constant watch during the battle. Suddenly, he fell, fatally wounded. He realized that his end was near. As he lay waiting for the last moment, he heard, "They fly." He weakly asked, "Who fly?" His bodyguard replied, "The enemy, sir." His face seemed to brighten as he mumbled, "Then thank God, I die in peace." The Angel of Death then claimed him for his own.

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The selection is first read as a whole to the class and then is dictated by pausing regularly at the end of each logical or grammatical subdivision in each sentence. No greater error can be committed in dictation than to make pauses after each eighth or tenth word. Such a procedure, although commonly seen in classrooms, reduces the selection to an arbitrary succession of words and phrases and makes rational punctuation impossible.

A second important caution is never to repeat after the signal has been given for the class to write. The teacher should therefore insist upon absolute attention while the children listen to the dictation of the first logical part. The signal is then given and all children pick up pens and write. No hand is allowed to be raised and no questions should be permitted. When a reasonable period has elapsed a signal is given for work to stop, the class comes to attention and the next portion is dictated. Under no circumstance should the teacher dictate while some children are writing, or repeat after the class has begun to write. The violation of this simple dictum courts inattention or confuses those who are trying to write. Ability to concentrate, it was shown, is one of the important ends of dictation exercises. When the entire selection has been dictated it may be reread as a whole, but this is not always necessary or advisable. Only when the sentences are long and the punctuation rather difficult for the children is this final rereading necessary.

3. *The Correction of the Children's Work.*—The

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children should now be required to put all pens and ink away. The perfect copy is shown and each pupil corrects his own product with ruler and pencil. Every error is underlined and the correction is written above it. As in the correction of composition, it is not necessary to have every type of error marked by proofreaders' marks; a mere underline is sufficient to call attention to an error that needs correction. To discourage efforts at spurious corrections and to encourage exclusive attention to correct form, a different writing medium is advocated for the correction period. If dictations, written in ink, are corrected in ink, children spend their best energies in devising ingenious ways of changing a *t* to *p*, a small *s* to a capital *S*, etc., thus losing the benefit inherent in all honest self-correction. Every incentive for thorough correction should be given. Children should exchange papers with their neighbors, who will help them to discover errors that were passed over. It should be explained that errors neatly corrected will be counted only half a mark, but errors overlooked will count doubly against a pupil. By these means—of course, petty devices—children are made to feel that careful correction is worth their best endeavors.

The rewriting of the dictation in absolutely correct form is a disputed procedure. The arguments offered by the disputants are precisely those listed in the debate for the rewriting of compositions and need not be repeated here. Most supervisors agree that if errors are carefully and intelligently corrected, the child will learn more from additional dictation les-

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sons than from mere rewriting of selections already dictated.

Further Test and Drill.—It is evident that no new fact need be taught for weeks. Each succeeding dictation lesson may consist of further test and correction, until the law of punctuation is applied by the children automatically. In teaching the correct use of quotation marks it is necessary to grade the topic by successive steps of difficulty. The child who can write the selection, "The Death of Wolfe at Quebec," may not be able to punctuate a sentence of the type, "Then I die in peace," he said, "for I have captured Quebec." The "broken quotation" must then be in a separate lesson. But thus far we have not considered long quotations extending over two or three paragraphs; here the punctuation and the arrangement are different and must be taught at a later time. In lessons on the comma, the semicolon, capitalization, the need for gradation is even more urgent because the topics are wider in scope.

The procedure for dictation lessons has thus far neglected the drill in unprepared dictation necessary in commercial life. Beginning with the sixth year occasional periods should be set aside for the dictation of text not seen by the class before the lesson and dictated without the nicety of logical pauses and successive signals for attention and writing. With the advancing grades this unprepared dictation should be given with greater frequency until the children become accustomed to the form of dictation heard in the business world.

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CHAPTER XII

MEMORY GEMS: MEMORIZATION AND RECITATION

Value of Memory Gems.—Memorization and recitation of standard prose and poetical selections have always been an essential part of every child's linguistic education. They are the means that are used in all stages of the child's development, from the "School of the Mother's Knee" through the high-school course. Their values are many and far-reaching, and can be summed up as follows:

1. Memorizing the gems of literature is a means of enriching the child's limited expressional stock. New words, strong phrases, traditional allusions, and classical expressions are acquired through a context that helps to give them both richer meaning and greater retention.

2. The mere knowledge of the literary gems that are memorized is an acquisition that is worth while for its own sake. We must acquaint the child in an informal way with his literary heritage.

3. Memorization of literary gems gives children a permanent possession of sentiments deep in ethical significance and rich in poetic charm, which grow in meaning and beauty with the ever-widening experi-

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ence of life. "The Chambered Nautilus" which attracted us in youth by its rich imagery is now a symbol of the moral urge that is prompted by a growing soul. "As the swift seasons roll" the poem glows richer and more beautiful in its symbolism.

4. But aside from the content aspect of these literary possessions, the child is becoming familiar with language structure that serves as a model for his own modes of expression. The child may not consciously set himself to imitate the selections he memorizes, but they nevertheless have a deep and subtle influence on his linguistic development.

5. The recitation of the memorized literary gems affords the teacher an excellent means of training his pupils in correct enunciation, clear articulation, correct voice control and modulation.

6. Another important gain that follows in the wake of dramatized recitation of memorized selections is increased confidence and more graceful self-expression. These values give the memory gem lesson a definite and undisputed place in every curriculum of English.

The Selection of the Memory Gem.—The standard of selection must be determined to a great extent by the child's conception of delightful literature. What is artistic and literary to us may awake no response from the child. Not the mature conception of the teacher, but the growing, aspiring conception of the child should determine what will be selected from our vast literary storehouse. The poem, "I Live for Those Who Love Me," expresses the basic tenet of Christi-

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anity. But to require children in the third year of the elementary school course to mouth it and to pledge themselves to "live for the cause that needs assistance" and "for the wrongs that lack resistance," is a procedure that borders on the ludicrous. Gray's "Elegy in a Country Church Yard" highly merits its place of honor in most carefully selected anthologies, but its recognized literary merit does not necessarily make it appropriate for an elementary school child. A forced study of what is above the child's artistic power of appreciation may undermine the child's interest in all literary form. But, it has been asked, will not this standard lead to the memorization of the commonplace in our language? There is no cause for alarm because it is not proposed to invite immature and unread children to select the content of their literary course. The standard formulated merely suggests that mature and widely read teachers and supervisors select from the rich literary sources those gems whose emotional and artistic appeals are so universal that even the developing child can respond to them, can feel their thrill and grow under their influence.

Motivating the Memory Gems.—The memorization of a literary gem should proceed from the children's desire to count it among their possessions. The discussion of the values of memorizing literary selections sums up the teacher's reasons for making this type of language exercise a vital part of the English course. But they do not necessarily evoke in the child a desire to memorize any selection. The problem that

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confronts the teacher in teaching the memory gem is how to motivate it for the children.

The problem of motivation may be solved by using the selection as the text for an intensive, appreciative reading lesson. Through the entire period the teacher must aim to bring within the children's sphere of appreciation all the elements that make the literary gem beautiful and rich in poetic imagery. At the end of the lesson the teacher must try to ascertain whether the selection was a source of pleasure to the pupils. If they caught the message and feel its spirit, the memorization can be based on real motive; if, for some reason, the selection proved uninspiring, it should not be forced upon them.

Let us assume that the class responded to the appeal of the literary gem. Children are called upon to dramatize it. The most enthusiastic volunteers are called upon. They eagerly come before the class, and with eyes on the page proceed with the dramatization. When it becomes apparent that the dramatization is a failure, the teacher asks the children to account for the result and elicits that unless the selection is known "by heart" its proper rendition is impossible. Here, then, is the motive for the memorization. The desire to recite the selection to the assembled school, an eagerness to possess what is beautiful and inspiring, and the preparation for a recitation contest may serve as added motives which reduce the tedium involved in memorization exercises.

Procedure in Memorizing Literary Gems.—1. *Sympathetic Comprehension of the Selection.*—It was sug-

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gested that the literary selection that is to be memorized should first be used as a text for an intensive reading lesson. In this appreciative reading the children feel the message of the selection, become familiar with the development of the central theme, and learn the meaning of new words, phrases, and allusions. With this basis of literary appreciation, the teacher is assured of a sympathetic comprehension by the class and a motive for memorization.

2. *Tracing the Sequence of Ideas.*—The second step preparatory to the memory appeal is to lead the children to trace the sequence of ideas in the selection studied. Let us assume that Kingsley's "Three Fishers" is to be memorized.

THE THREE FISHERS

Three fishers went sailing away to the West,
Away to the West as the sun went down;
Each thought of the woman who loved him the best,
And the children stood watching them out of town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And there's little to earn, and many to keep,
Though the harbour bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the lighthouse tower,
And they trimmed the lamps as the sun went down;
They looked at the squall, and they looked at the shower,
And the night-rack came rolling up ragged and brown.
But men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
And the harbour bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands
In the morning gleam as the tide went down,

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And the women are weeping and wringing their hands
For those who will never come home to the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep;
And good-bye to the bar and its moaning.

The successive thoughts of the first stanza analyzed by a sixth-year pupil were listed as follows: Three fishermen sail away; they sail to the west as the sun goes down; each thinks of his wife; their children watch them; men must work, women must be sad when little is earned and many must be supported; poor fishermen must go even if it looks dangerous. These ideas are now committed to memory with little effort because the entire thought is evolved most naturally and logically.

The values of memorizing the sequence of ideas in their natural order are many. First, it simplifies the memorization of the poet's words; each thought prompts its appropriate expression, and with little effort a verbatim reproduction is achieved. Second, it tends to make recall rational rather than verbal. Study the strained face of the child who recites a memorized selection; the steady stare and the nervous anxiety give evidence of the fact that the child is focalizing all conscious effort on the next line or the next word. The recitation is a verbal reproduction, not a reconstruction, thought by thought, of a real situation. When these children err, they say what is absolutely devoid of meaning. But when the child learns first the sequence of the ideas and then the poet's phraseology, he recites a series of thoughts,

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he thinks constantly of the next idea, and when he errs he substitutes his own clumsy wording which expresses the idea in mind in a less elegant form. A third value of such a procedure is that it trains children in systematic and sustained thinking.

3. *Thought Questions Answered in the Words of the Author.*—When the children have acquired the "thought-skeleton," each idea should be subjected to a thought question, which should be answered by the children in the words of the text to be memorized. As illustrative of this phase of the lesson, we may submit the following reproduction of questions and answers, the part of the answer in italics recited with emphasis by the children:

Teacher: How many fishers left for the trip?

Pupil: Three; *three* fishers went sailing away to the west.

Teacher: In what direction did they sail?

Pupil: Toward the west; three fishers went sailing away *to the west.*

Teacher: What time of day was it?

Pupil: Twilight; away to the west *as the sun went down.*

Teacher: Who was in the thoughts of these men?

Pupil: Their wives; *each thought of the woman* who loved him the best.

Teacher: What did these women feel toward these men?

Pupil: They loved them; each thought of the woman *who loved him the best.*

Teacher: Who were interested spectators?

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Pupil: Their children; *and the children stood watching* them out of town, etc.

After these specific questions are asked, a series of general problems are formulated which necessitate the reading of that portion of the selection which is to be memorized. The teacher now requests: "Read the line that gives the saddest picture; the happiest picture. Read the line that tells most about the dangerous character of the work of these men. What line is most beautiful; least beautiful? Read these. What line gives a hint of the end of the trip? Read the line that is hardest to remember; easiest to remember. What line tells most about the homes of these men?" These are only a few of many questions that can be formulated to serve as a pretext for making children read and reread the stanza that is to be committed to memory. Let the teacher now call for volunteers and note how large a part of her class is ready to recite the stanza that was studied.

Retention Through Thought Rather than Through Memory Appeal.—Throughout this lesson the aim was to avoid an appeal to verbal memory. In "memory-gem" lessons one hears the teacher's commands, "Recite the first sentence. Say it five times. Recite the second sentence. Say it five times. Recite the first and the second sentences three times, etc." At times the sentence is not made the unit of reiteration, for the teacher requires the children to repeat the first line, the second line, the first two lines, the third line, the first three lines, etc. What wonder that most children feel that the term *gem* is a misnomer in these lessons, for

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the adjective *memory* overshadows its noun. The procedure that was suggested aims to produce permanent retention through thought rather than through mechanical repetition, through a method that stimulates self-activity rather than one that dulls the mind by its monotony, through devices that set problems before the class rather than incessant drill.

Aids to Memorization.—But not all children can memorize by a method that makes an exclusive thought appeal. Minds that are unimpressionable must have auxiliary appeals that are more mechanical in their nature. Among these aids to memorization are: (1) Verbal repetition; (2) singing the music that may have been composed for the selection; (3) pointing out the rhymes supplies additional auditory associations; (4) emphasizing the rhythm or the lilt is, at times, almost as effective as the music accompanying a poem; (5) multiple sense appeal, in which an effort is made to have the selection heard, seen, acted, and written by way of providing for auditory-, visual-, and motor-minded children.

The Recitation.—Few lessons are as uninspirational and devoid of social spirit as the recitations of memorized selections that one hears in a round of visits to schools. Child after child is called upon to recite in rapid succession to prove to the teacher that he has perfect mastery of the correct sequence of words. The auditors listen listlessly and hold themselves in readiness to correct the child who recites, or to continue, should the poor victim become confused and unable to proceed to the end. These recitations must

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be enlivened by a rational purpose and a social spirit. Every opportunity for dramatization should be utilized by the teacher. The child who recites should be made to feel that his classmates are anxious to hear *his* rendition, to see *his* dramatization, and to compare *his* interpretation with theirs. The teacher must not exaggerate her position; she must strive to make the child feel that she is only one member of the child's audience. When a pupil's recitation is ended, his classmates should be called upon to comment on the clearness of speech, the accuracy of pronunciation, the naturalness of the rendition, and the grace of the dramatization. The teacher should be as insistent on eliciting favorable criticism as unfavorable, when it is merited. After every child has recited, the pupils should decide the relative merits of their classmates' recitations and should elect that child or those children who will represent them in the "assembly exercises" or who will be sent to other classrooms when classes exchange recitations. The oral recitation should never descend to the dispirited level of a test. If the teacher is anxious to secure a mark for each pupil in these exercises, she should ask the children to write out the selection and then rate them according to a uniform scale.

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GOLDWASSER, I. E. Method and Methods in the Teaching of English, chap. XI. D. C. Heath & Co.

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HALIBURTON and SMITH. Teaching Poetry in the Grades. Houghton-Mifflin Co.

HOSIC, JAMES F. Elementary Course in English. All chapters for suggestions for material. University of Chicago Press.

KLAPPER, PAUL. Teaching Children to Read, chap. VII. Bibliography at the end of this chapter contains suggestions for material.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE VALUES OF FORMAL GRAMMAR

The Disputed Place of Grammar in the Modern Curriculum.—Progressive teachers of English hold divergent and almost irreconcilable views on the place, the functions, and the ultimate worth of grammar as a subject in the elementary school curriculum. The camp is divided into three factions. The first justifies the traditional emphasis on formal grammar with its terminology, classifications, rules of syntax and analysis —all to be taught in separate periods with as much correlation as can naturally be introduced. The second group insists that formal grammar must be eliminated and the necessary laws of language be taught through the correction of errors that children make in their written and oral speech. The third view on the teaching of grammar is a compromise: it admits the futility of formal grammar that is taught as the scientific analysis of speech, but it has faith in the teaching of those facts of grammar that can be related to the child's needs. This last school would teach grammar as part of the course in composition; would have every lesson in grammar arise in errors committed by members of the class; would eliminate all those elements of formal grammar that cannot be

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applied directly by the child in the process of improving speech; and would teach grammar incidentally, not in set periods. The reaction to formal grammar is not a temporary attitude accompanying changing conceptions in teaching; it is a vigorous protest against abuses that have characterized most of the teaching of grammar.

Grammar a Discredited Subject.—The indictments brought against current procedures in the teaching of grammar are many and grave.

1. The old boast, "Grammar teaches how to write and speak a language correctly," has been disproven, not only by practical results observed in actual teaching but by a deeper analysis of the relation that exists between speech and grammar. Every teacher can bring evidence to prove that proficiency in grammar is no guarantee of equal or approximate proficiency in composition, and vice versa. A child, whose compositions leave little to be desired, may score a failure in grammar, while his neighbor, well versed in the intricacies of verbal forms and the rules of agreement in grammar, may write English that is devoid of all application of this technical knowledge. Exercises in grammar are essentially analytic; exercises in composition are creative and essentially synthetic; therefore, ability in one of these forms of language study is not necessarily carried over to the other.

2. In most classrooms, there is little or no relation between the courses in grammar and in composition for a given term. In schools organized on a departmental schedule in the last two or three years

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it is usual to assign the teaching of grammar to one teacher and the teaching of composition to another. These teachers proceed independently, the one teaching children the nominative absolute, the other struggling with the class in the hope of breaking the habit of using dependent clauses for complete sentences. It is advisable to assign to one teacher all the subjects that are grouped under the head of English, so that every natural correlation will be introduced and thus the work will be given a unity of aim which it will otherwise lack.

3. Grammar as outlined in many courses of study and in textbooks written for elementary schools abounds in sterile verbal subtleties. Thus, the child is taught to keep gerund and gerundive apart. The word *sailing* in the sentence, "Sailing a boat is great sport," must be distinguished from the word *sailing* in, "The sailing of the ship was scheduled for midnight." True, the one word has an element of action in it, while the other has not; the one word cannot be introduced by the article *the,* while the other can; but when all these distinctions are noted and the proper names applied, in what vital way has the child's speech been affected? The dative object and the direct object are now taught in many schools. This terminology is absolutely essential in language like German and Latin, but in English it serves only to multiply unnecessary classification. What is gained by calling *hat* the direct object and *me* the dative object in the sentence, "John gave me the hat"? The old form, "objective case," answers the purpose because in Eng-

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ıfsh there is no difference in the form of words in the accusative or in the dative case. Such an unwarranted increase in terminology reduces grammar to a sterile study of formalism in language.

4. The prevailing method of teaching grammar is another cause of the discredit which has been cast upon the subject. In the teacher's endeavors to have children master an ever-increasing terminology and ever-growing classification, memory drills are greatly emphasized. Recitations are given over exclusively to reciting set classifications, stereotyped definitions, formal rules and memorized lists. Grammar is still a memory subject rather than a rational study, for the din of monotonous repetitions of *I, my* or *mine, me, we, our* or *ours, us,* or of *I love, you love, he* or *she loves, we love, you love, they love,* etc., is still to be heard in most schools. It seems that we have not yet learned that mastery of elements, isolated in an arbitrary list, is no guarantee of ability to use these very forms in natural context.

5. Another very serious criticism that must be urged against current courses in grammar is the undue variety of terminology. The market is flooded with a variety of books that find their way into the school. Most of these books repeat the same limitations and abuses, but each one of them justifies its appearance by a new system of names for the various elements in grammar. No attempt is made to reach any degree of uniformity in the terminology; each book insists on its own system, and each author is a law unto himself. What is the inevitable result? Different schools

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use different books, and even the various classes in one school frequently do not use the same series of books. The pupils become hopelessly confused by the array of imposing terms. As the children pass from one school to another and from one class to another, they find the new teacher using a terminology unknown to them. What wonder that children leave school ignorant of the basic terms in grammar!

An illustration of the extent of this variety of terminology will at once show the gravity of the situation. A recent writer collected in a comparative table the terms used by our leading textbooks for common grammatical elements. The results as tabulated are given below in slightly modified form. The writer listed ten books that are in use in schools to-day. For purposes of comparison he selected five fundamental uses of nouns and adjectives in the predicate, viz., (a) *good,* in the sentence, "He is good"; (b) *John,* in "This is John"; (c) *him,* in "I know him"; (d) *red,* in "We painted our barn red"; (e) *me,* in "He gave me the book." The Roman numbers in the table represent these five elements in the order named; under each is listed the various terms applied by textbooks used in classes to-day. The disagreement in the nomenclature that exists for predicate constructions is typical of the general confusion found in grammatical terminology.

What is the immediate problem that confronts us in the teaching of grammar? Out of this chaos there must be evolved a simplified and uniform nomenclature that will be used at least in an entire city school

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TABLE SHOWING VARYING TERMINOLOGY USED IN CURRENT TEXTBOOKS FOR COMMON GRAMMATICAL ELEMENTS

The Textbooks	Terminology Used in Each Book for				
	I[1]	II[2]	III[3]	IV[4]	V[5]
1. Mead.....	Attribute Complement	Attribute Complement	Direct Object	Objective Complement	Indirect Object
2. Reed and Kellog	Attribute Complement	Attribute Complement	Direct Object	Objective Complement	Indirect Object
3. Mother Tongue.	Predicate Adjective	Predicate Noun	Direct Object	Predicate Objective	Indirect Object
4. Whitney.....	Predicate Adjective	Predicate Noun	Object	Objective Predicate	Dative Objective
5. Carpenter.....	Subject Complement	Subject Complement	Direct Object	Adject. Obj. Comp.	Indirect Object
6. Buehler.....	Attribute Complement	Attribute Complement	Object Complement	Obj. Attribute Comp.	Indirect Object
7. Krapp.....	Predicate Adjective	Predicate Nominative	Object Complement	Objective Complement	Dative Object
8. Longman's.....	Adjective Attribute	Noun Attribute	Direct Object	Supply "to be"	Indirect Object
9. Metcalf.....	Predicate Adjective	Predicate Noun	Object	Objective Attribute	Indirect Object
10. Maxwell.....	Predicate Adjective	Predicate Noun	Object	Objective Complement	Indirect Object
Number of Different Terms Used	Three	Five	Four	Seven	Two

[1] has reference to terminology applied to *good* in, "He is good."
[2] has reference to terminology applied to *John* in, "This is John."
[3] has reference to terminology applied to *him* in, "I know him."
[4] has reference to terminology applied to *red* in, "We painted our barn red."
[5] has reference to terminology applied to *me* in, "He gave me a book."

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system. In New York City the Board of Associate Superintendents evolved such a uniform terminology. But the textbooks placed in the children's hands have a nomenclature that does not agree with the one that is taught the children, and thus confusion is not entirely obviated. It is necessary to have special editions of textbooks for the city, if the children are to derive the benefits that come from using a book in studying grammar.

We have seen that these indictments against the teaching of grammar are serious and true, but they do not disclose weaknesses inherent in the subject itself, or any defects that cannot be remedied. Proper organization of the course of study and a more pedagogical teaching procedure will remove these abuses in the teaching of grammar. We must turn therefore to a consideration of the values of grammar as an elementary school study and the principles governing the methods of teaching the subject.

Values of Grammar.—A definite formulation of the values of grammar will set up for us definite aims that must be achieved in the teaching of the subject. The aims become standards, in terms of which we judge the efficiency of our methods of teaching and the wisdom of the course of study that is to be taught. The values of grammar can be grouped under five heads, viz., the *practical,* the *disciplinary,* the *literary,* the *cultural,* and the *preparatory* values.

1. *The Practical Value of Grammar: A Guide to Correct Speech.*—An investigation into the reasons why teachers and principals believe that grammar

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should be taught showed that the first justification was that "grammar is a guide to correct speech." But we must not read too much into this function of grammar. It was pointed out in a previous connection that a knowledge of grammar does not guarantee correct speech. Grammar is the science of language, and serves as an aid in correct speech in the same way as the knowledge of the science of any medium of expression serves the art of expression. A knowledge of logic does not guarantee logical thought, but it does give the student a means of detecting logical fallacies and a standard in terms of which he can judge the results of his own thinking. So, too, grammar teaches us not to speak English correctly, but to understand it.

The teaching of grammar is justified only when children learn to use it for purposes of self-criticism and correction. Thus, the child who learns the functions of verbs and participles may still write in his composition "When he seen what I done," but in the period of correction he underlines *seen* and *done* and uses verb forms. The wise teaching of grammar seeks to make correction of all speech, not arbitrary changes according to the dictates of the teacher, but an intelligent process of self-criticism.

2. *The Disciplinary Values of Grammar.*—Properly taught, grammar is a means of developing powers of concentration, reason, abstraction, and analysis in verbal relationships. Grammar has been called the logic of elementary education. Laurie tells us, "Grammar is logic in the concrete and language in the abstract. . . . The boy who is intelligently ana-

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lyzing in grammar is intelligently analyzing the process of thought, and is a logician without knowing it." Max Müller expresses the disciplinary value of grammar as follows: "Grammar is logic of speech even as logic is the grammar of reason."

A few illustrations will readily show that the disciplinary value of grammar is not overstated. The reason, the concentration, and the analysis required of a school child in perceiving the differences between "He was gone an hour" and "He has been gone an hour," "I want him" and "I want him to be a soldier," are as intense as the mental activity of the college student who distinguishes *extension* from *intension* in logic or *perception* from *conception* in psychology.

Cautions in Seeking the Disciplinary Value of Grammar.—Potent as the disciplinary value of grammar is, we must nevertheless remember that the mental power developed in this subject can be applied only to verbal relations. The powers of analysis and discrimination developed in grammar will undoubtedly be of service to the student in his study of rhetoric or the grammar of foreign languages, but of little or no direct help in studies and experience markedly different from the verbal relations of grammar. This is true of all mental habits, for a mode of mental activity developed in one experience is transferred to other experiences in direct proportion to their similarity. The limited value of the mental power developed in grammar proves conclusively that no topic in grammar must be taught for its disciplinary value alone. Teachers and textbook writers often teach in grammar what

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has no practical worth and justify themselves on purely disciplinary grounds. If the fact of grammar has no social use, it merits no place in class studies. A fact, aside from its use, has no value. Hair-splitting differences and nice verbal distinctions develop thought for more verbal puzzles. The disciplinary values of grammar must be achieved through the teaching of topics that can be used by the child in the correction of his speech and that have, therefore, social worth.

3. *Grammar as an Aid in Literary Interpretation.* —It has often been asserted by the sponsors for formal grammar that a knowledge of grammatical elements and functions is of great aid in literary interpretation and expressive reading. In the sentence, "That book that you saw belongs to me," the relative emphasis on each *that* and the correct phrasing may prove perplexing to the young mind. But the recognition of the grammatical function of each "that" indicates clearly that the demonstrative adjective and not the relative pronoun should be stressed in reading; the feeling for the clause which comes from a study of grammar prompts correct phrasing. Similarly, passages are encountered in all reading where thought is not clear because the grammatical relations or functions of certain phrases and clauses are not perceived.

This belief, firmly rooted in many minds, that a knowledge of grammar is a direct aid in literary interpretation, was subjected to a test by F. S. Hoyt. The results of examinations given in composition, grammar, and literary interpretation were tabulated in

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comparative lists. They prove that proficiency in any one of these three branches of the study of English is no index of the proficiency that will be attained in the other two. A cursory and superficial analysis of the marks of any class in grammar and in literary interpretation will serve to reënforce the conclusions based on this experimental evidence. Hoyt's findings are precisely what one would naturally anticipate, for the mental attitudes and activities in grammar and in literary interpretation are so different that the excellence developed in one subject need not necessarily influence the proficiency attained in the other. Only when awkward or unusual construction of sentences hinders acquisition of meaning will a knowledge of grammatical functions aid in literary interpretation. But in the elementary schools such situations are not the rule, and the child's grasp of grammatical function is so meager that it is of little service in tracing the relationship among clauses and phrases in sentences whose construction is not lucid.

4. *Cultural or Conventional Value of Grammar.*—The teaching of grammar may be justified on the ground of social expediency. Many facts are taught, not because they have intrinsic worth but because they form part of that knowledge stock that society expects its citizen of culture to possess. The terminology of grammar adds useful words like *modify, independent, dependent, mode, tense, imperative, superlative, clause*—words that enrich vocabulary and add to expressional powers.

But while the conventional demands must be con-

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sidered they must not become the sole governing factors. The merest superficial knowledge of grammar will satisfy the conventional demands. In the teaching of those elements of grammar that can be applied by the child in his endeavors at self-criticism and correction, these cultural values of the subject can be attained. This conventional justification need not guide either in teaching the subject or in organizing a course of study, for it is a result of the teaching of grammar by any method and through any course.

5. *Preparatory Value of Grammar.*—The final value of grammar lies in the fact that it is a necessary preparation for future studies. Ignorance of grammar makes work in rhetoric very difficult. Teachers of foreign languages in secondary schools complain that progress is impeded by the children's lack of basic knowledge of English grammar. If we take Goethe's dictum seriously, "He who knows only one tongue, does not know that well," the preparatory value of grammar must be regarded seriously. But when we recall the high rate of elimination in the elementary schools, it is obvious that this preparatory value justifies the teaching of grammar only to ten per cent. of the school population—those who reach the high school and pursue the study of rhetoric or foreign languages.

SUGGESTED READING

The suggested reading for this chapter will be found at the end of chapter XIV.

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CHAPTER XIV

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE TEACHING OF GRAMMAR

The discussion has thus far concerned itself with abuses that mark prevailing methods of teaching grammar and with a survey of the legitimate aims and scope of the subject. We must now turn to a consideration of the principles which may lead pupils to attain these values so that grammar may become an intelligent subject to them, intimately related to the needs of their lives.

1. Begin with the Sentence.—This is the first of these basic principles. In grammar, as in most subjects, an analytic-synthetic method is the rational procedure in teaching, but a cursory examination of most of our elementary books on the subject shows the reverse form of instruction. The noun, the verb, the pronoun, the subject, the predicate, are the topics emphasized in the initial pages. The mastery of these elements prepares the child for the comprehension of the sentence. But logical though this procedure may be, it is hardly psychological. If we are to make grammar rational and necessary in the eyes of the child, we must begin with that part of grammar which is related to the child's needs. The "point of contact"

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is the sentence. Since the child strives constantly to express thought, the sentence, the unit of thought expression, must be mastered first. It is true that when the child first begins to speak, "he is a word utterer"; but if the word is spoken spontaneously and not as an imitated sound for the edification of the proud parents, it is, in intent, a sentence. "Papa," "hat," "doll," usually symbolize "Take me, papa!" "Give me the hat!" "I want the doll." The accompanying gestures and pantomimes are evidences of the thought which governs these utterances, which are called in psychology "word-sentences."

The application of this simple dictum is obvious. There must be an emphasis on sentence structure before the parts of speech are taught. Sentences in great number should introduce lessons on participles, prepositions, conjunctions, or any specific technical element of grammar. In the course of an analysis of the structure of these sentences and the function of all their elements, the new lesson should be evolved. An illustration of this principle will be found in the lesson on subject and predicate which is outlined in the discussion of the third principle in the teaching of grammar.

2. **Make the Work as Concrete and Practical as Possible.**—This is the second guiding suggestion that we must keep in mind. Grammar finds few friends among the children in those classes where it is introduced. The reason is not far to seek. These children find it an unnecessary and arbitrary classification of the speech they think they know. As the grades ad-

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vance, children like grammar better, for the thoughtful ones now see its influence on speech. The most flagrant waste of time and energy in grammar can be traced to the absence of any intimate relation between the lessons in this subject and those in oral and written composition. There must be such a correlation between these subjects, between the art and the science phase of language, that every grammar lesson begins in the expressional errors of the children. If the rule of agreement is to be taught, select for the children's compositions sentences that violate this law; if the relative pronoun is to be presented, select for their written work sentences that are too simple. Lead them to see how the weak construction: "The poor sailor then stepped into the royal chamber. He was destined to discover a new world for Spain," can be strengthened by turning it into, "The poor sailor, who was destined to discover a new world for Spain, now stepped into the royal chamber." Add instance after instance, and let the children discover that the word *who* in one case, *which* in another, *that* in still another enable one to give the suspense and the strength to the two sentences. Ask the class what the next lesson in grammar ought to be and they will state their own aim, thus motivating the lesson. After the topic is taught, this knowledge acquired in the lesson must be applied in the correction of the past written work. Errors of agreement, like *One of the men were,* can now be changed by the children themselves; simple, isolated sentences are now fused into one suspended sentence, and the practical aspect of grammar is thus

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emphasized. To neglect this simple principle of motivation is to neglect the final justification for the teaching of grammar.

3. Shall the Method in Grammar Be Inductive or Deductive?—Teachers frequently ask this question today. To emphasize the disciplinary value of grammar, teachers adopted the long inductive method of discovery. This led to extravagant expenditure of time and very often did not eliminate the drill in the end. To save time and effort, and at the same time guarantee a mastery of the facts, other teachers reverted to the old didactic method, the deductive procedure. The teacher explains the new lesson, the children memorize the necessary information, and proceed with the application. Observation of class teaching seems to indicate that the current method in grammar is deductive rather than inductive. Extremes must be avoided, and one method must not be adopted throughout the school course to the exclusion of the other. Each method has its distinct and legitimate province. In those grades in which formal grammar is introduced the lessons may safely follow an intensely inductive procedure. It is a longer method and is more costly in time, but it is justified by the fact that a permanent foundation is being laid. In this grade the teacher is anxious to give clear and accurate concepts. The method which leads children to the conclusion rather than gives it to them, and which insists that children discover information after studying specific details, is best designed to achieve this end. But in the upper grades the development

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method is not necessary. Children know the basic facts, hence they can reason by analogy and arrive at new conclusions. Knowing an adjective and an adjective phrase, it becomes unnecessary to learn inductively the adjective clause. In these upper grades the book can be used as a basis; the deductive method, therefore, becomes the more natural one. It is also found that much of the advanced grammar is only an added application or a review of the simpler forms. Thus, the child who knows a substantive phrase and an infinitive, can be spared the tedium of a development lesson on the infinitive as a subject. It must also be remembered that there is much in grammar that is arbitrary; a deductive lesson is therefore more appropriate. No explanation can account for four genders in grammar and only two in life, three cases in English grammar and many more in actual speech. And finally it is evident that a deductive lesson is not synonymous with arbitrary memory drill. There can be as much thought and concentration in the deductive lesson as in the inductive. The special province of each of these modes of procedure can be made clearer by concrete illustrations through appropriate lessons.

Inductive Lesson: Subject and Predicate

Introduction:—The best means of establishing a point of contact between this topic in grammar and the child's experience is to begin with the pupil's errors of sentence structure due to omission of subject or

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predicate, or both. The following are typical mistakes: *"Hoping to hear soon," "Standing in the doorway," "Received your letter of last Thursday."* A few well-chosen questions will elicit from the children that in these expressions we do not know who hopes or stands in the doorway or received the letter. Proper subjects are then supplied, *I* for the first, *My brother* for the second, and *The teacher* for the third. The first expression then becomes *I hoping to hear soon.* This the children readily change to *I hope to hear soon.* After the same changes are made in the second and the third expressions the teacher announces the aim of the lesson—to learn a mode of testing whether sentences have their necessary parts.

Presentation of the Lesson.—The teacher now calls for a sentence about Columbus telling what he did, another telling what was done to him, and a third, what he was. The following sentences were obtained from a sixth-year class:

Columbus discovered the continent of America.

Columbus was imprisoned on board his ship.

Columbus was a bold navigator.

In the same manner the following series of sentences was elicited from the class:

The sun shines upon the earth.

The sun is hidden by the clouds.

The sun is a large fireball.

The teacher's questions then brought from the children that Columbus is "the person talked about" in the first group of sentences, and the sun is "the thing talked about" in the second. The children were also

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led to conclude that the second part of each sentence in the first group "tells about" Columbus and the second part of each sentence in the second group "tells about" the sun.

The second part of the presentation required the children to substitute some other name or word for *Columbus* or ~~*the sun*~~ in the sentences above. "Columbus was a bold navigator" became

Captain Drake
Robinson Crusoe
Paul Jones
Magellan
} was a bold navigator.

"The sun is hidden by the clouds" was turned into

The moon
The bright star
The blue sky
The mountain top
} is hidden by the clouds.

In the same way children were required to retain *Columbus* and *the sun* and "tell other things about them." The results obtained from the class were:

Columbus
- was a poor Italian lad.
- appeared before the Court of Spain.
- was not easily discouraged.
- did not fear his angry sailors.

The sun
- warms the earth.
- gives us bright days.
- is very far from the earth.
- hurts some people's eyes.
- makes people happy.

The teacher then asked, "How many parts has each sentence?" "What does each part do?"

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Comparison.—The next step in the development of the concept subject and predicate was a contrast between sentences and phrases or incomplete sentences. The children were led to compare each of the following pairs and tell which expression was a sentence:

To the circus.	William went to the circus.
I hope the day will be bright.	Hoping the day will be bright.
The hungry bird flew into the room.	Into the room.
Received the gift.	The poor lady received the gift.

Generalization.—The teacher then told the class that the part of a sentence that tells "what we talk about" is called *subject,* and that part that tells "what we say of the subject" is called *predicate.* The children were then required to formulate their definitions of these two new terms.

Application.—Many exercises which applied this knowledge were now introduced. Children were required to find the subject and predicate of given sentences; to supply a variety of subjects for a given predicate; to supply many predicates for a set subject; to turn phrases into sentences; to make sentences out of participial constructions; to indicate the sentences in a paragraph in which there were no capitals and no periods. The final form of application consisted in having the children reread their old compositions in their endeavor to change every faulty or incomplete sentence so that it would have both subject and predicate.

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Deductive Lesson: Infinitives

In contrast with this lesson for a sixth-year class, let us turn to a seventh-year group that must study infinitives.

Preparation.—The children were given a talk on the desirability of variety of expression, with plenty of illustrations to make the point clear. The teacher concluded this short discourse by stating the aim of the lesson, "To learn a new and more attractive form of expressing our ideas."

Presentation.—The children were told to find the chapter on infinitives in their textbook, and their attention was directed to the very first sentence—"An infinitive is a verb form, introduced by to, and used as a noun, adjective, or adverb." After the sentence was read, the children were asked to write a list of verbs on their papers; *go, see, exercise, work, do,* etc., were among those given; each verb was then introduced by *to* and the infinitives *to go, to see, to exercise,* etc., were formed.

To make the concept clearer, a few minutes were spent on such pairs of contrasting sentences as:

Go *to the store. To go to the store* when told is a boy's duty.

Write carefully *to the end. To write carefully to the end* should be our aim,

and the class was led to see clearly the differences between infinitives and prepositional phrases.

The class then turned to the first function of an infinitive, "used as a noun." The children were re-

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quired to tell the functions of a noun. They reviewed their knowledge of this topic in grammar, and the class formulated the following composite result: "A noun can be used (1) as subject, (2) as object, (3) as predicate noun." The teacher then put on the board:

He likes ———.

He desires ———.

and the children supplied appropriate infinitive forms. They were led to realize that in these sentences the infinitives function as objects. The children then constructed original sentences.

In the same way, the teacher put on the board:

——— *is beneficial for the body.*

——— *pays in the end.*

and the children supplied *"To exercise"* for the first and *"To work faithfully"* for the second. An analysis of the sentences showed that the infinitives were now functioning as subjects. In similar exercises the children verified the fact that infinitives can be used as nouns.

The adjective function of infinitives was taken up in the same manner. *"He is an honorable man"* was changed to *"He is a man to honor."* The syntax of *honorable* and *to honor* was compared, and the children saw clearly that infinitives can perform the office of adjectives.

The third and final important function of the infinitive, the adverb, was taught very easily. The teacher presented, *"He came," "He wanted to see Brutus,"* and asked the children to join these two weak sentences into one strong sentence, using the fewest num-

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ber of words. After a few trials and failures he obtained *"He came to see Brutus."* An analysis of this simple sentence made the adverbial function of the infinitive phrase, *to see Brutus,* apparent. Original constructions by the children were called for to emphasize this function of infinitives.

The deductive lesson as here outlined, although requiring more than a single period, saved considerable time and labor, and gave, as a result, a conception of infinitives as clear and as convincing as most inductive lessons on this topic. In addition, the class was given a very effective lesson on how to study grammar. It is obvious that to lay down a general law in favor of one method is shortsighted because the method must be determined by the conditions that obtain in a given class.

4. The Use of the Type Form Must not Be Overemphasized.—In the use of type forms in grammar, the teacher is beset by many difficulties. Some textbooks measure the child's progress in grammar by his mastery of set forms of analysis, synthesis, and construction. Others, on the contrary, do not dwell on these type forms long enough, fearing to reduce the subject to mere rote learning. In the teaching of simple sentences, it is not safe to follow the type form of (a) subject, (b) predicate, (c) complements, too closely. In the sentence, *"The boy worked his way through these difficulties,"* this sequence helps, but when the child is confronted by a poetical construction like *"Them that honor me, I will honor,"* he applies the same principle of analysis by location and makes

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them the subject rather than the object. It is apparent that overemphasis on the type form reduces grammar to a verbal, not a rational, level.

What, then, is the place of the type in the teaching of grammar? In all initial lessons and in all drill lessons, the type form should be adhered to very faithfully. So vigorous should the drill on the type be that the imitation of its form becomes a habit. But as soon as the principle involved is thoroughly mastered, we should make gradual and persistent effort to work with as many variations of the type form as possible. This guarantees thought, prevents slavish imitation and mechanical rote work.

5. **By Avoiding Stereotyped Definitions and Set Formulæ We Are Saved from Another Erroneous Form of Teaching Grammar.**—To many, definitions must play an important rôle in grammar which is a subject of classification and systematization. But no matter how essential they may be, we must guard against a parrot-like repetition of scientifically accurate definitions. They should always be the result of the children's own activity and should come at the end of the lesson after each child has seen the function of those elements which he defines. The wording, too, should, in the main, be the child's own; only inaccuracies of expression should be changed by the teacher. Definitions like "A preposition is a word used to show the relation between a noun or a pronoun and some other word—a verb, an adjective, another noun or a pronoun," or "A participle is a word derived from a verb, participating in the properties of a noun or adjective,"

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are set forms that have their place in textbooks but should never be heard coming from children in the classroom, for their scientific precision presupposes a mature mind and a rich knowledge of language on the part of the pupil. Teachers are learning that ability to define is no index of comprehension. Most of the concepts which are vital parts of life and which are perceived with rare clearness are most difficult to define, for the individual lacks the necessary verbal ability. Clear perception of function, not verbal formulation, marks thoroughness of comprehension.

The safest procedure in the matter of definitions is not to demand the memorization of the phraseology but only of the basic and component ideas. These the child should state in his own words. Hence the child should be required to remember that a preposition (1) connects, (2) shows relation; a participle is (1) a verbal, (2) can be used as adjective or noun. In reciting, the child should give, first, an original illustration, then follow this by a statement expressing the ideas memorized. Hence, the child answering the teacher's question, "What is a preposition?" says: "The boy stood *on* the burning deck—*on;* a preposition is a word used to connect and show the relation of deck to stood." In similar manner the child recites the definition of a participle by saying, "*Seeing* the enemy, he ordered a retreat—*seeing;* a participle coming from the verb see, used as an adjective, relating to the subject." If no two children are allowed to give the same illustration, we have a guarantee that such recitations show rational memory of ideas grasped, rather than

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verbal memory of concepts vaguely comprehended. The recitation of a definition must be a process of rational reconstruction rather than mere verbal reproduction.

6. The Application Step Is the Final Justification of Grammar and Must Be Accorded the Most Important Place in the Lesson.—Attention to the application of the laws learned in grammar is a means of emphasizing the utilitarian value of the subject and of clarifying the concepts that the child has acquired. The application step is also a means of bringing out the disciplinary value of grammar for, as the type is varied, the child's ingenuity, thought, and concentration are stimulated.

Application of any topic learned is not complete unless the children have had two types of exercises. The first form of application is one of analysis. Let us assume that the first lesson on participles, the present participle, has just been completed. Selections containing present participles are taken up and the children must analyze each sentence, point out the participles and justify their answers by explaining the function of each participle. The second and more important form of application is through synthetic exercises in which children are required to originate context which shows the use of the participle. Lists of verbs are given out and the pupils must now use the present participial form in a sentence. Pairs of simple related sentences are written on the board, and each child must combine each pair into a long, suspended sentence through the use of a present participle. Such

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synthetic exercises test not the verbal memory of definitions, classifications, names or forms, but measure efficiency in the correct use of language elements.

A further illustration may serve to clinch the point. The adjective and the adverb were taught to a sixth-year class. The method of application by analysis contained exercises which asked: "In the following paragraph, which are adjectives? Which adverbs? Why?" The method of application by synthesis gave the children sentences like, "The swift eagle flew through the air." The child called upon was required to tell the syntax of *swift* and to change it to the opposite form. The pupil's answer was: "*Swift* talks about eagle, therefore it is an adjective. The opposite form is, 'The eagle flew *swiftly* through the air.'" The sentence, "He writes well," was given to another member of the class. She recited: "*Well* tells in what manner he recites, therefore it is an adverb. The opposite is 'He is a good writer.'" A more difficult application by synthesis, suitable for seventh-year work, asks the child to tell which form he would use in the following sentence and why: "He ground the knife sharp or sharply"; "The flower smells sweetly or sweet"; "He looks stern or sternly"; "The food tastes well or good." These synthetic exercises concern themselves with testing the final aim of grammar, *ability to use*. The method of application by analysis is not even a guarantee of comprehension. Children often recognize grammatical forms by accidental endings like *ly* or *ing* and rarely by the perception of their function.

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7. Function Should Be Made Focal in All Grammatical Analysis.—This vital suggestion often determines the progress of all future work. It is obvious that no element in language, whether word, or phrase, or clause, has a fixed grammatical classification, for, as the function varies, the classification changes. Children must be taught the absurdity of calling *milk* a noun or *who* a relative pronoun. They must be taught from the very beginning to seek the function that a given element discharges in the sentence. They will soon realize that *milk* may be a noun or a verb. Since function determines grammatical classification, courses of study and textbooks insist that all terms be defined in terms of use. The usual form is therefore, A noun is a word *used* as the name of a person, place, or thing; milk is a noun *because* it is *used* to name a thing.

The suggestion is helpful, but it does not go far enough. Since the function not only determines classification but also lies at the very basis of efficiency of grammar, why not give the function first? Hence, the child should recite, "*Milk* shows action; *therefore* it is a verb." In the sentence, "Who was it who came into the room?" the first *who* asks the question, *therefore* it is an interrogative pronoun; but the second *who* connects the clauses and stands for the person, *therefore* it is a relative pronoun. At first glance the objection may appear petty, but practical experience soon shows how helpful is the use of *therefore* in place of *because,* for the word *therefore* forces the child to determine the function of the element in question. Very often children state the correct function of the

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word but err in the classification; such pupils show ability to think correctly and consistently, for the incorrect answer is due to faulty memory rather than lack of ability to reason. This form of parsing develops a useful attitude in all advanced work. When the child in his later work meets the sentence, "The Lorelei on the rock sat combing her golden hair," he says, "'On the rock' tells me about the Lorelei, *therefore* it is an adjective phrase." It has been part of the exasperating experience of all teachers of grammar to have a child give a wrong classification, and when asked for the reason to find him inventing a justification more stupid than his original error merely to seem consistent. Such absurd procedures are guarded against and even undermined when children are taught from their very earliest lessons in grammar to state the function first and then the classification.

8. **Analysis Is Important but We Must not Analyze for the Sake of Analysis.**—This principle saves much time and useless effort. There can be little doubt about the need and the value of exercises in analysis of sentences, for they give helpful insight into language structure, teach how to apply grammar to derive obscured meaning, and train in logical thought.

But despite the undisputed use of formal analysis, not all sentences are worthy of analysis. "A wise abstinence as well as a wise selection is essential to success." The next question that arises is, therefore, "What shall we select for analysis by the children?" Only those things should be subjected to analysis by the class which (1) are difficult or doubtful of com-

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prehension and hence need analysis, and which (2) present constructions that allow for useful synthetic exercises. Thus, in the two sentences, "The snow, falling thickly, blinded the soldiers," and "The snow falling thickly, the soldiers were blinded," the use of the commas, and the change from the active to the passive voice, give practice in variety of sentence structure. Effective exercises in oral composition and variety of expression can be given with this as a basis: "The barometer, falling rapidly, foretold an approaching storm," becomes "The barometer falling rapidly, the approaching storm was foretold." So, too, analysis of sentences like "One of the soldiers were captured," or "A committee of Sophomores and Juniors were appointed" shows at once the bad agreement and affords opportunity for a language drill both necessary and profitable.

A final consideration in exercises in analysis is the method of indicating, by a diagrammatic scheme, constituent elements of a sentence and their relation. It is obvious that the diagram makes a strong visual appeal, saves time, and facilitates the handling of component elements, especially in complex sentences. But great care must be taken, first, to keep the diagramming simple, and, second, to have a uniform system throughout the school course. A violation of these suggestions means endless confusion and decreased attention to the thought involved.

9. **"Parsing Is Essential if Used Within Bounds."**—This is the next counsel to the teacher of grammar. This form of grammatical exercise is indulged in so

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frequently because it develops a habit of speech which makes one sensitive to correct forms. The constant drill on "case and why" develops a sensitivity for the different case forms; one strives automatically to make "who" and "whom," "she" and "her," and "I" and "me" grammatically correct; one acquires a habit of seeing the grammatical function to be discharged and then endeavoring to use the appropriate form. Parsing is the basis of technical grammar just as classification is the basis in the sciences. But while we grant its importance, we must guard against analysis and classification that are too minute. We must remember that "a sentence is a living thing, and all analysis is, in a way, an insult to it." We must constantly differentiate between a classification that gives useful habits of speech and one that leads to no useful end. Classification for its own sake is as sterile practically as it is deadening mentally.

Let us illustrate incorrect parsing due to overemphasis on classification. The teacher of seventh-year pupils asked them to parse *chair,* in the sentence, "He sat on a quaint stool, a chair used by the natives." The answer required was, "Chair is a common noun, third person, neuter gender, singular number, objective case, in apposition with stool, after the preposition on." Of the five items enumerated by the child, three are absolutely worthless. Third person can well be omitted, for almost all nouns can boast of that; singular number is too evident to need mention by 7B pupils; neuter gender can be passed over for the same reason. The classification and the case with its proof are the

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only two necessary facts that should be stated. To go beyond this limit is a waste of time, an emphasis on non-essentials, and an irrational exaltation of the technique of speech.

10. "False Syntax" Must Be Emphasized, for It Is an Effective Means of Applying the Facts of Grammar.— Many teachers of English and textbook writers are bitter opponents of the traditional exercises in "false syntax," for they hold that these language drills are both unpedagogical and fraught with grave danger. Their argument reduces itself to the oft-quoted dictum that language is learned through imitation; they argue that the child must be surrounded with models of correct speech, which become unconscious sources of suggestion and imitation. But in "false syntax" the method is opposite in spirit and in aim, for the incorrect forms are presented and it becomes a source of either imitation or confusion with correct speech. The protest would be well founded if the facts implied were true. In all "false syntax" we present those errors that the children make in their own speech or that they constantly hear from those about them. These errors are analyzed, the reason for the incorrectness is noted, and the justification for the corrections is given. The very mistakes in English that constantly assail the children's ears are so thoroughly undermined that they are avoided by the pupils. Judging from the position taken by those who protest against "false syntax," one would infer that children either hear only the correct forms or, as would be the case in a foreign language, know neither correct nor incor-

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rect forms. If this were true, "false syntax" would indeed be a gross pedagogical error.

The next question concerns itself with the time when the correction of "false syntax" should be emphasized. In the earlier textbooks of grammar, it was customary to study first the laws of grammar, and then to apply them in the correction of common errors. But the current method is more logical, for it applies every law of grammar to correction of errors directly it is understood. After the child learns that every sentence has a subject and a predicate, his attention should be directed to such errors of incomplete sentences as *"Hoping to hear from you,"* or *"Awaiting your reply,"* or *"Am delighted to hear of your success";* after the rule of agreement has been learned, correction of such typical mistakes as *"William or John are the guilty person"* should be taken up; a knowledge of the possessive case should lead to the correction of such errors as *childrens', mens',* etc. To postpone such constructive work means to continue grammar as an arbitrary subject despite the fact that we can interpret it in terms of social need and social value for the child.

11. **Great Care Must Be Exercised in the Organization of Tests.**—The nature of examination questions often indicates wrong conceptions of the aims in teaching any subject. All test questions must be designed to test the child's progress along those lines that mark the guiding values of the subject. With this standard of judging test questions, the weakness of the following questions becomes apparent. "What is an interroga-

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tive pronoun?", "What is a relative pronoun?", "Give three examples of each," "State the rule for the formation of the possessives in nouns," "Decline the first personal pronoun," are typical of those found in school examinations, and must be condemned, for they test verbal memory, not ability to apply the lessons of grammar to the needs of speech.

Proper test questions in grammar always reveal knowledge of function and ability to apply it to speech correction, for these are the ultimate ends of the subject. In contrast to the questions mentioned, the following show a marked superiority: "Correct the following." "Which form is correct? Why?" "Combine each pair of sentences through the use of a relative pronoun," "Combine them through the use of a participle," "Give sentences using *who* in three different cases," "Expand the following phrases into clauses," "Reduce the clauses in the following sentences into phrases," "Change the number of each noun in the following sentence and indicate the changes that must be made in verbs and pronouns." In answering these questions, neither mere memory of form nor glib recital of textbook definitions will be of service, for they test ability to use grammatical elements in original context.

A seventh-year class was given the following test after a complete study of relative pronouns and relative clauses:

PART I

1. Analyze the following sentences and state the syntax of each clause:

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(a) The man, whom all the world honors, was once a poor farmer boy.
(b) The house, which we bought recently, we sold again to the man who called yesterday.

2. Parse all the relative pronouns in the following:
(a) To him who hath, much shall be given.
(b) They have rights who dare maintain them.
(c) Such of his songs as were sung were much applauded.
(d) I know the man of whom you speak.

3. Expand the adjectives in the following sentences into clauses:
(a) "A soft answer turneth away wrath."
(b) My kind friends helped me to obtain an excellent position.
(c) The past summer has brought me a pleasant friendship.

4. Contract the relative clauses in the following into adjective phrases or adjective words:
(a) I was expected to accomplish a task that is impossible.
(b) I do not wish to do work that is unnecessary.
(c) The man who is blind was injured in the street
(d) In the tree that had lost its leaves, were three nests.

5. Insert the proper relative pronoun in the following and give reasons for your choice:
(a) Man is the only animal ——— can talk.
(b) There are many persons ———, though they be starving, will not beg.
(c) This is the malt ——— lay in the house ——— Jack built.
(d) There are many ——— saw him fall.
(e) He ——— does all ——— he can, does all ——— can be expected.

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PART II

1. Correct the following, giving reasons for each change:
   (a) Whom did you think that it was?
   (b) I saw the person who you described.
   (c) This is the man which I saw.
2. Combine the following pairs of sentences through the use of a relative pronoun and show why the single sentence is better:
   (a) The poor Italian lad stood before the queen. He was destined to discover a new world.
   (b) Lafayette was a French nobleman. He came to America to help Washington.
3. Use *who* or its forms as relatives in three different sentences showing three different cases. Do the same with *which*.
4. Rewrite the following sentences, selecting the form you think correct:
   (a) The man (who, whom) I took to be your brother, has enlisted in the army.
   (b) Is he the man (who, whom) I am supposed to resemble?
   (c) I suggested those (who, whom) should be invited.

An analysis of this test shows at once that all questions test thoroughness of comprehension and ability at application. Part I, given one day, contains questions that follow type forms and that can therefore be answered by any child who is attentive and makes an honest effort at mastering his class work. Part II, given the succeeding day, emphasizes versatility in the use of relative forms. The exercises are more difficult in character and require originality and deeper insight into grammatical functions. The pupil who

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secures a satisfactory rating in such a test gives evidence of comprehension and ability to apply his knowledge in his attempts at self-correction.

But the teacher must not suppose that a test of such a practical nature cannot be given in the lower grades where only elementary facts are taught. The following is a reproduction of an examination given to a fourth-year class in one of our city schools:

GRADE 4B

1. Change these to mean more than one:
   (a) The boy is tired.
   (b) That man works hard.
   (c) The dish is broken.
   (d) The calf is gentle.
   (e) The city is large.
2. Underline the subject and the predicate in the following:
   (a) Nathan Hale was hanged.
   (b) The spider spins his web.
   (c) Near the stream stood a house.
   (d) Down flew the eagle.
   (e) The Dutch traded with the Indians.
3. Put the right word in the blank space:
   (do) I have ——— my lessons.
   (is) There ——— two apples.
   (break) The pencil is ———.
   (come) Yesterday he ——— to see me.
   (run) He has ——— his last race.
4. Rewrite the following sentences changing the underlined words to the singular or plural:
   (a) The mouse ate the cheese.
   (b) The oxen drew the plow across the field.
   (c) The children went home.

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(d) John took the box.
(e) The knife is sharp.

5. If you have studied a stanza about a flower or a tree, write it; if not, write any stanza of poetry studied this term.

6. Write correctly:
   (a) I seen your brother yesterday.
   (b) Jack done it.
   (c) You was there.
   (d) I broke me pencil.
   (e) I stood up early.

7. Write five sentences about the flag flying above our school. Make the sentences tell:
   (a) What things do. (Two sentences.)
   (b) What is done to things.
   (c) What things are.
   (d) What the quality of things is.

8. Underline subjects and predicates in the following sentences—put a single line for subject, double line for predicate:
   (a) Is Jack coming?
   (b) Down came the snow.
   (c) The boy won the medal.
   (d) The games were fine.
   (e) Ex-President Roosevelt was in England.

9. Dictate:
   "We're going to have a new maple tree in the park," said Sam to his teacher.
   "How do you know?" said the teacher.
   "Well," replied the boy, "I stuck a seed in the ground."

   Points covered:
   (a) Quotation marks, (b) capitals, (c) punctuation, (d) spelling, (e) paragraph.

10. Rewrite the following, putting in abbreviations wherever possible:

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Mary went to the store to buy a pound of tea, two dozen eggs, a peck of onions, a pint of cream, and an ounce of pepper.

12. Proper Reviews Are Essential for Successful Work in Grammar.—Grammar makes an unusual demand on retentive power because of its extensive subject-matter, rich in terminology, laws, and classifications. To make all this necessary information permanent, frequent reviews are essential. But there is no need of setting aside definite periods given over exclusively to set reviews on a limited portion of the subject. The most successful reviews can be incidental in the course of ordinary application exercises that are part of daily teaching. Let us illustrate such a review. In a seventh-year class, the sentence for analysis was taken from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, "We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live." Among the questions were the following:

1. Analyze the sentence and give the syntax of each clause.
2. What is there the same in the use of *to dedicate* and *that that nation might live?*
3. Change the phrase to a clause and the clause to a phrase.
4. What is the difference between the two words *that?*
5. How would that difference help you in correct reading?
6. What is the word *those?* Apply the test and prove that you are right.
7. The word *lives* is what part of speech? Change it to a verb without changing its spelling.

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Such a spirited lesson demands keen thought and insures a good review, for old knowledge is called up incidentally and is seen from a new aspect. A set review lesson on a definite topic in grammar often lacks the effectiveness of the informal review.

13. **The Textbook Must Be Used Frequently in the Teaching of Grammar.**—Proper methods of teaching in grammar give the textbook a prominent place. It must be used for purposes of comparison and verification in all inductive lessons. At the end of the lesson on subject and predicate, it was shown that the children are led to formulate their own definitions. The children's result should be compared with the definition in the book and the elements in the two statements should be noted carefully. The teacher must elicit from the class the reason for the discrepancy, if any exists, and then lead them to decide whether the definition in the book, or their own, is worthy of memorization. Often the statement in the book is voted too difficult or too long and it must give way to the simpler formulation by the class.

A second invaluable aid rendered by the book is in the application step. A good textbook in grammar must be replete with a host of well-graded and varied exercises which give the children drill in the use of the facts that were taught and thus relieve the teacher of the burden of seeking satisfactory forms of application. This is the most important single factor which determines the value of a textbook in grammar in elementary schools. A third use of the book is to give

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a logically arranged summary of the facts taught in the class and thus make unnecessary the keeping of notes by children in anticipation of tests. And, finally, a good textbook in grammar gives suitable text for deductive lessons and thus serves as a means of teaching children how to study the subject. In the lesson on *infinitives,* the reader will find an illustration and an amplification of this function of the book. In the upper grades the emphasis must shift from *the teaching of grammar* to *teaching how to study grammar.* In discharging this function, the textbook is of greatest service.

14. Careful Gradation Is a Potent Factor in Removing Difficulties of Comprehension in Grammar.—In grammar, as in arithmetic, undue difficulties are introduced in the course of teaching, by a lack of careful gradation. Teachers take the objective view of a topic and plan it by subdividing it into its logical parts, teaching them in successive periods. It is absolutely essential that the teacher take the child's place, imagine himself on the child's plane of ignorance of the basic facts of grammar, and then try to foresee the successive difficulties that will beset the path of the immature mind as the entire topic is unfolded. Failure to do this, whether due to lack of preparation or of sympathetic insight, undermines successful teaching, for a new difficulty is introduced before a preceding one is solved and cumulative confusion results. An analysis of the sequence of topics in the following lessons will give a conception of the kind of gradation often absolutely necessary in grammar.

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Topic: Predicate Adjective and Predicate Noun or Pronoun

1. Exercises in which constructions like *The happy birds, The beautiful flowers, The green grass,* etc., are changed to *The birds are happy, The flowers are beautiful, The grass is green.* Repeat, changing *The French people are artistic, The Japanese are shrewd,* etc., to *The artistic French people, The shrewd Japanese.*

Elicit: *happy, beautiful, green, artistic, shrewd,* as used in the full sentences are (a) adjectives and (b) in the predicate, hence (c) called predicate adjectives.

2. Pick out predicate adjectives in the following and apply the test to each:

The weather is mild—*mild*—The *mild* weather.

3. Complete the following by using predicate adjectives to make complete sentences:

The Indians ——— ———.

Rabbits ——— ———.

Care must be taken not to supply the verbs in this form of drill for then most children answer correctly though they may not understand the function of the predicate adjective.

4. Which of the following are objects and which predicate adjectives? I saw John. He is studious. He studies grammar. Grammar is useful, etc.

5. Enriched conception, the predicate noun taught through the idea of identity by a method similar to that used for the predicate adjective. The test: can subject and predicate noun be interchanged?

6. Exercises like those under 2, 3, 4, adapted to predicate noun.

7. The introduction of the pronoun.

8. Exercise like 2, 3, 4, adapted to the pronoun.

9. Compound predicate adjectives and nouns.

He is keen, conscientious and just. He is commander of the army and leader of the people.

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10. False syntax. Exercises in which errors like *It is me, It was her,* etc., are corrected.

11. Distinction between adjective and adverb in following constructions: *The flowers smell sweet, The child writes well,* etc. This is the most advanced phase of the topic and must be postponed for work in later grades. The teacher who tries to save time in the average class by omitting some steps in this gradation invariably loses time and effort for a confusion is introduced which almost defies later attempts at clarification.

15. All Grammatical Forms and Functions Must Be Taught in the Same Association in Which They Will Be Used in Natural Speech.—The bulk of the subject-matter of grammar deals with modification of important parts of speech. In nouns and pronouns, much time is taken up in teaching person, number, gender and case; in adjectives and adverbs, comparisons with the three degrees of positive, comparative, and superlative, in regular and irregular forms; in verbs, person, number, mood, tense, and voice. The teaching problems that arise in these modifications are simple enough, for the difficulties involved can be solved readily by the application of the principles discussed in this chapter.

In teaching the forms and the functions that constitute the modifications of English grammar, it is general to find teachers presenting them in lists devoid of all natural context. But mastery of forms without content does not develop ability to use these forms in content. Children recite rules for the formation of plurals or of opposite genders until every detail is known beyond doubt. In classes, one hears

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the monotonous babble of *child, children; ox, oxen; sheep, sheep; scissors, scissors; actor, actress; gander, goose; hero, heroine;* etc. But despite this glib recital in list form, one finds the compositions of these children replete with "She was an *actor,*" "Five *oxes* pulled the wagon," "In this picture I see many *sheeps.*" Such results after tedious drills in lists come with unfailing regularity, for the language forms were not taught in those associations in which they will be used later in life. The changing forms of gender and number must be taught in context, the teacher giving one form and the children the opposite one in a sentence, e. g.:

Teacher	*Pupil*
I	*We* all intend to study.
oxen	An *ox* is a strong animal.
actor	She is a great *actress.*

Such recitations and drills take longer than those in list forms, but they produce gratifying results in oral and written composition.

In teaching case forms, the teacher's problem is simplified by beginning with a context that shows the child clearly that this new phase of grammar is essential. "Case" must therefore be taught through pronouns, for, aside from the possessive form, it plays no important rôle in nouns. In teaching cases of pronouns, the law which insists on natural context must be obeyed rigidly. To make children repeat incessantly *I, my* or *mine, me, we, our* or *ours, us,* is no guarantee that they will use these forms correctly.

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The declension of the first personal pronoun should take the following form:

I have a book.	*We* have many books.
The book is *mine.*	They are *ours.*
It is *my* book.	They are *our* books.
Give the book to *me.*	Give the books to *us.*

A later drill should require children to read the following sentences and insert the correct form of the first personal pronoun:

My brother, James, and .... took a walk.

We passed .... school.

Jane Smith was just coming out. She saw ..., but did not know it was ....

The same procedure applies to drills on positive, comparative, and superlative degrees of adjectives and adverbs and to all modifications of verbs. The principal parts of commonly used irregular verbs form one of the most important topics in teaching verbs, because they are constantly misused by children. One hears with disturbing frequency, "We *brang* our lunch"; "Yesterday we *come* into the class"; "We *done* our lesson in a book that *costed* five cents"; "I *hurted* myself." Realizing the need of vigorous effort in improving this type of error, teachers subject the principal parts of verbs to incessant drill in tabular form. The din of *go, went, going, gone; come, came, coming, come; hurt, hurt, hurting, hurt;* etc., is heard through transoms and open doors, but when compositions of the succeeding weeks are examined, it becomes mani-

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fest, again, that recitation of grammatical forms in isolated lists is a pedagogical practice made reverent by age rather than by results. Let the teacher insist on having the parts of the verbs in context. The child's successful recitation of "I *come* into this room every morning; yesterday I *came* into the room; you *are coming* into the room now; the boy *has come* into the room to-day," gives the teacher good cause to hope that part of the grammatical forms and functions may pass over into the expressional stock of her children.

Summary: Place of Grammar in the Elementary Curriculum.—We saw in the course of this discussion that grammar has been attacked most vigorously by many progressive teachers, and the indictments found against it are just. But most of the objections are remedial, for they are due not to the inherent limitations of grammar as an elementary school subject, but rather to poorly organized courses of study and faulty methods of teaching. We must look, therefore, to a liberal reduction in the requirements of courses in formal grammar, to a simplification and standardization of its terminology, and to the introduction of methods of teaching which emphasize the function rather than the form. Then, and only then, will grammar come into its own in the pedagogical sphere of elementary education.

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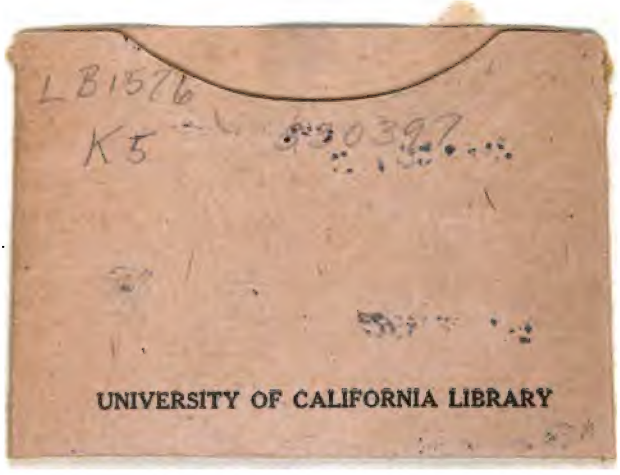
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